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CORRESPONDENCE

Catholics & racism

Piedmont, Calif.

To the Editors: [In] your editorial, "The Business of Us All" [September 22], regarding the Bensonhurst incident, a very painful fact of this deplorable action was not mentioned. The perpetrators of this incident, as in the Howard Beach matter of a year or so ago, as well as much of the past (and present, maybe?) racial violence in such areas as Chicago and Boston, all seem to come out of ethnic groups which have been purportedly subject to the cultural and religious influence of the Catholic church. Here in San Francisco, gays and lesbians know which parts of town to avoid for fear of their personal safety...guess which groups predominate there? Why is it that Hispanic, black, and Asian groups prefer to separate themselves from mainstream parish life?

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As we count bodies and worry about the ebb and flow of attendance at Mass, Catholic schools, CCD, etc., maybe we need to address a more serious question. Where is the evidence that the American Catholic church's influence has had any significant positive effect on how [Catholics] treat their fellow humans? The record of the past twenty-five to thirty years is far from good and shows no sign of improvement.

JIM McCREA

Who's afraid of whom?

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: It is disheartening to find *Commonweal* ["The Business of Us All," September 22] joining in the conventional reaction to the tragic murder of Yusef Hawkins, a young black man, in a largely white (and Catholic) neighborhood of Brooklyn. *Commonweal* quotes approvingly another black man's complaint that he cannot walk "throughout" New York "without fearing (whites)."

This is no doubt true, and no doubt justified. But the fear whites entertain for blacks is very much more widespread in New York, and equally justified. Each of the young white men who attacked Hawkins has reason for fear in much larger areas of New York than does any black, as all know. And each has witnessed daily the fears of his parents and grandparents simply in riding the subways, or visiting the store. All New Yorkers do likewise, including both whites and blacks, and for all the fear is very largely of blacks.

This is an unchallengeable fact of everyday experience in New York, wholly supported by crime statistics. To ignore it, in the fashion of so much of the media, and now *Commonweal* as well, must appear to the neighbors of Yusef Hawkins's murderers as a perplexing hypocrisy. If you were their Catholic pastor, how would you explain it?

A balance in accounting for these terrible events will not be obtained by teeing off on Sharpton and Farrakhan. It is patronizing to blacks to attempt to do so, and, I think, *Commonweal* should not so demean itself. Balance, that is to say honesty, will be achieved by stating the facts as they are and, nonetheless, holding these young men wholly responsible for their actions. In the same way, are not Christians required, after duly acknowledging the frightful history of oppression of blacks in America, to hold young black men responsible for their crimes?

CHARLES P. WEST

The editors reply:

The young white men who attacked and murdered Yusef Hawkins may indeed have reason to fear blacks, even if as whites they are part of the city's racial majority. But their acts, like those of the black youngsters involved in the Central Park wilding last spring, have only heightened the fears of all New Yorkers. Both incidents point to the same conclusion: one's fears and one's skin color can never justify the kind of brutalization shown in the murder of Yusef Hawkins or the beating and rape of the woman jogger. Nor can such fear, however deeply engrained or plausibly explicable, excuse racial prejudice

(Continued on page 654)

Commonweal is indexed in Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, Catholic Periodical Index, Index of American Periodical Verse, Book Review Digest and Book Review Index. Microfilm from Vol. 1, 1924, to current issues available through University Microfilm, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and on Microfiche from Bell & Howell, Wooster, Ohio 44691. Serials Data program No.: ISSN 0010-3330. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional offices. Copyright © 1989 Commonweal Foundation. Single copy, $1.50. Yearly subscriptions, U.S., $32; Canada, $34; foreign, $37. Special two-year rate: U.S., $57; Canada, $61; foreign, $67. All Canadian and foreign subscriptions must be paid in U.S. dollars by International Money Order or by check on a U.S. bank.

Illustrations: Cover design, pp. 625, 631, 633, Emil Antonucci; p. 612, Ross, Rothco; pp. 614, 635, 644, 645, Paul Valerry.

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COMMONWEAL 65

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Commonweal, [ISSN 0010-3330] A Review of Public Affairs, Religion, Literature, and the Arts, is published every other Friday commencing the second week of January except the last week in December and monthly in July and August, by Commonweal Foundation. Display advertising correspondence should be sent to Ruth E. Taylor, 11 Graffam Rd., So. Portland, Me. 04106 (207) 799-4387, classified advertising correspondence to 15 Dutch St. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Commonweal, 15 Dutch St. New York, N.Y. 10038.

Onward

As anniversaries go, sixty-fifths rank third; quarters and halves of centuries count for more. But it happens that at the same time as *Commonweal* observes its 65th anniversary, a first rank anniversary is being celebrated: the Catholic church in the United States is having its bicentennial. Our rough calculation, somewhat to our surprise, shows that for one-third of that two-century span, *Commonweal* has been a part of the story. Despite the minority views propounded here, certainly before Vatican II, we have been able to bring a religious perspective to "the great issues of the day" (as we were wont to say) and a worldly perspective to the great issues of the church. Our independence and dual perspective have allowed both editors and readers to express a deep commitment to and a deep discontent with the church and the society in which the church has ultimately flourished.

Those minority views quickly became the received wisdom in the post-Vatican II American church, so much so that it seemed at times that a *Commonweal* might no longer be necessary. Foolish thought. The American Catholic church and U.S. society are deeply in need of the distinctive and corrective orientations each has supplied the other. American life, religious and secular, has been enriched by the tensions and achievements of the ensuing collisions and collaborations. In his essay, "Join It, Work It, Fight It: American Catholics and the American Way" (pp. 624-30), David O'Brien traces and analyzes that history, ending with the query: Will we finally accept our full responsibility for public life as Catholics and Americans?

At the current moment nothing seems so necessary or so difficult. On both sides of the church-world equation the "established disorder" is often disheartening even to those fully committed to the tensions of being American Catholics.

In both its liberal and conservative variations, Catholic assimilation to the American way of life has brought accommodation to public philosophies of declining substance and vigor. Our paralyzed politics, brittle culture, mean-spirited public life can hardly attend to questions of the common good, the commonweal, the demands of justice that cry out for redress and redistribution. Indeed, the style of governance we have witnessed these past eight years has not only ignored those cries, it has put at risk our very ability to provide the most basic of civic necessities: personal security, housing, education, and health care. We have departed not merely from liberality and liberalism but from more basic norms: the social nature of human beings, their rights and responsibilities within an attentive community, the reasoned discourse that governs and sustains such communities through a vigorous politics. These are the very standards that the best of the Catholic tradition espouses for civil society; they also constitute the threads of argument that have woven their way through *Commonweal*'s sixty-five years. Yet our individualistic, libertarian, and avaracious society has hardened its heart against these criteria of community and justice.

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Individual acts of compassion or charity are dwarfed by the systemic reduction of the poor to begging and sleeping on the street. We have so much and are prepared to reapportion so little. American Catholics must not go on living as easily as we do with that imbalance in our political and personal lives.

Yet even as we question the capacity of our economy and our government to help support a decent life for all, citizens of other countries vote with their feet. However unjust, however brutal American life may seem at times, these immigrants (over 12 million in this decade) see something better than they have in the lands of their birth. In Eastern Europe, the failure of state socialism and soviet-style governments has turned Poland, Hungary, and the Baltic states toward experiments with mixed and market economies and multiparty politics. It is a modest triumph for Western liberal democracies in Europe and North America but one that calls for greater generosity and better coordinated global policy than the U.S. seems prepared to develop.

The church has a useful contribution to make here. Appropriately a Polish pope provides in the encyclical, *On Social Concerns*, a framework for analyzing the moral choices now to be faced in the disintegration of the Soviet empire, the reduction in East-West tensions, and the growing gap in economic resources between North and South. At their annual meeting in Baltimore this past week, the U.S. bishops were presented with two documents, on the Middle East and on international debt, both useful instruments for assessing moral issues in areas where U.S. policy weighs critically in the outcome.

Paradoxical then, that these well-honed skills, rigorous moral analysis, and urgent calls for justice should elude the pope and bishops when it comes to the life of the church itself. The great expectations following Vatican II have after twenty-five years come up against a solid barrier of fear and insecurity, created to a large degree, we believe, by Roman overreaching and high-handedness. The laity and clergy will hear from bishops, *sotto voce*, how difficult a time it is and that patience is the order of the day. Something is to be said for this. But only something. And only temporarily. The words of John F.X. Herriot (in the London *Tablet*, Sept. 23), usually so moderate, signal the growing impatience: "The time for quiet diplomacy is past, and so too, at every level of the church, for 'obedience,' 'meekness' and 'discretion' as a cover for what is in fact sheer spinelessness. Such public abuse of authority demands a public solidarity movement of resistance from the local churches."

"Enjoy yourself, forget the last sixty-five years."

What calls forth such impassioned language and what is clear to all, especially the laity, is the steady erosion of the spirit of reform that promised to make of Catholicism an adult faith fit for (not fitted to nor set against) life in a fragmented and often heedless world. Perhaps the church as an institution can survive on the narrow and inflexible views that Rome enforces; but the church as the people of God cannot. And will not. It cannot be a question, however, of using past institutional crimes and misdemeanors as easy alibis for opting out or of endlessly feeding our anger. Losing faith is one thing; starving it is another; discarding it out of petulance is something else again.

The laity must come to believe that the future of the Catholic church is our responsibility and to act in accord with this belief. The contents of this 65th anniversary issue can be seen as an agenda for that: concern for the future of faithfulness, especially but not only among younger members of the people of God; need for a more authentic expression of our incarnational theology, linking the life of faith to our work in the world; yearning for a distinctive Catholic sensibility in the midst of a bourgeois culture. Onward.

AS THE WORLD TURNS

"We want to see perestroika succeed." It took George Bush ten months to say that publicly, ten months that have been shaking the geopolitical world. Watching his administration has been like watching the video replay judges on Monday night football dither over an obvious touchdown call. The main feeling of everyone else is: let's get on with the game.

And so next month Mr. Bush will meet Mikhail Gorbachev one-on-one, somewhere off the coast of Malta. Why is it, though, that nearly a quarter into his term, the first question that sprang to mind with the announcement of the nonsummit summit was, "Can George Bush handle it?" On the evidence of his first ten months, the answer is not clear.

For example, he seemed genuinely moved by his visit to Poland and Hungary this past summer, yet his response to their pressing requests for assistance was remote and inadequate. Italy offered virtually as much. It took the U.S. Congress to double our aid. Meanwhile, the Bush administration was at odds on U.S.-Soviet policy, Messrs. Quayle, Cheney, and Gates speaking from one side, Mr. Baker sometimes from another. Finally, after his trip to the Wyoming mountains in September with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, Baker prodded administration policy out of its persistent reexamination mode by finally declaring, "It would be folly indeed to miss this opportunity."

Folly indeed. Even Mr. Bush has started talking about ships in the night. The changes in the Soviet Union under Gorbachev have been as unmistakable as they are dramatic. For sure, not yet a second Russian Revolution, and for sure, still many miles

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to go—individual human rights, multiparty democratic structures, the sheer opening of the Soviet mind, to begin. But unpredictably and undeniably creative nonetheless. And the side effects elsewhere, just as improbable and just as remarkable: the dismantling of chunks of the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe, the withdrawal from Afghanistan, the pledge of nonintervention in the affairs of others, and the unilateral reductions of troops and weapons systems. These achievements were encapsulated in Shevardnadze's unprecedented remarks before the Soviet legislature last month. In what the *New York Times* called a "highly unusual act of national contrition," he admitted that the invasion of Afghanistan had been unlawful and that the Krasnoyarsk radar station in Siberia was an "open violation" of the 1972 ABM Treaty and would be dismantled. "The main thing is not to conceal," he told the deputies, but to "acknowledge and correct mistakes."

Imagine the potential of such a policy world-wide. What might be the effect on U.S. relations with Vietnam or Cambodia if we were to admit our mistakes in Southeast Asia? While confession has always been seen as beneficial for individuals and for those around them, what might it mean for nations? The possibilities seem endless and thought-provoking.

Mr. Bush has let hesitation rule too long. The decision to meet with Gorbachev bodes well for taking a definite direction. Bush now has the opportunity to look beyond political expediency and generously encourage others. We shouldn't just want to see *perestroika* succeed. We ought to help it.

A goodly company

Looking back over *Commonweal*'s sixty-five years, I think first of the pioneers who did the hard part, who started from nothing and in a very short time enabled the magazine to attain national recognition. Its distinguished list included such early contributors as G.K. Chesterton, Carlton J.H. Hayes, Lewis Mumford, Luigi Sturzo, Dorothy Day, Hilaire Belloc, Agnes Repplier, and Walter Lippmann. The magazine also secured an impressive number of subscribers in its very first years.

Leading these pioneers was the zealous and eloquent founder and editor Michael Williams, who believed that the Catholic tradition had an important contribution to make to the public discussion of the issues of the day. Shortly after the beginning he was joined by the erudite and prolific George N. Shuster, as managing editor, who was convinced the greatly limited range of American Catholic thought should be broadened by exposure to the stimulating ideas of European theologians and philosophers. It was mighty nervy of me to seek (unsuccessfully) to become part of such a lofty enterprise upon graduation from a liberal arts college in the magazine's first year.

In 1933 I finally succeeded in joining the staff in a very menial capacity, in the circulation department under the tutelage of the experienced and caring John F. McCormick, whose management in the face of recurring financial crises kept *Commonweal* going for the first fourteen years. But when he relinquished the magazine to Philip Burnham and me in 1938, it was badly in debt. Here we made the mistake of giving up *Commonweal*'s tax-exempt status, which was not regained until 1983. This reflected our somewhat youthful assumption that through a more socially conscious editorial policy and the development of other progressive ideas, the new version of the magazine could succeed as a business venture.

Three months later such hopes were dashed when the reorganized *Commonweal* issued a widely quoted statement calling for "positive impartiality" toward the Spanish Civil War. One result was the loss of over one-fifth of our subscribers. For years thereafter survival was a matter of touch and go, made possible only by the generous donations of the magazine's most loyal supporters, while a most dedicated staff held on despite their extremely low salaries. (This was before the days of the solicitous Commonweal Associates.) There were a number of truly critical moments. That *Commonweal* has somehow succeeded in bearing witness for a full sixty-five years is to me a source of wonder and gratitude to God.

Our offices in Grand Central Terminal, at 386 Fourth Avenue, 232 Madison Avenue, and now 15 Dutch Street, have witnessed a remarkable procession of talented, dedicated men and women contributors. My connection with *Commonweal* has enabled me to get to know personally such figures as Jacques Maritain, Dorothy Day, Father Reinhold (anti-Nazi refugee and promoter of the Mass in the vernacular), Msgr. Ligutti (director of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference), Clare Huchet Bishop (noted author of children's books and promoter of better Christian-Jewish relations), and Benedictine Father Godfrey Diekmann, to mention a few. How can one overvalue such an inspiring experience both as editor and publisher?

It has also been a privilege to work alongside a succession of able, if not prophetic, editors down through the years. It was particularly inspiring to sense the realization of long-held hopes in the advent to the papacy of John XXIII and the positive achievements of the Second Vatican Council, which he convoked. It was also during these decades as well that the roles of laity and, in particular, women in the church have made some advances—if hardly reflected by the present climate at the Vatican. Comparisons are supposed to be a no-no, but under the magazine's present editor and her supporting staff, I believe that *Commonweal* is now at its all-time best—and that the sixty-fifth anniversary is a harbinger of a great future. E.S.S.

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J. Bryan Hehir

EAST-WEST, NORTH-SOUTH

BREAKING 'THE LOGIC OF BLOCS'

The autumn of 1989 has been a time for memories and for hope in international relations. The fiftieth anniversary of the outbreak of World War II provided an opportunity for many to reflect upon the causes and consequences of history's most destructive conflict. This process of sober historical review set a useful context for evaluating the changes which are daily transforming the international order produced by the Second World War. The peaceful transition to a non-Communist government in Poland, the evolution of Hungary into a republic based on the values of "bourgeois democracy and democratic socialism," and the exodus of East Germans which precipitated a change of leadership in their country—these events constitute an astonishing pattern of peaceful change in one of the world's most rigidly controlled and dangerous regions.

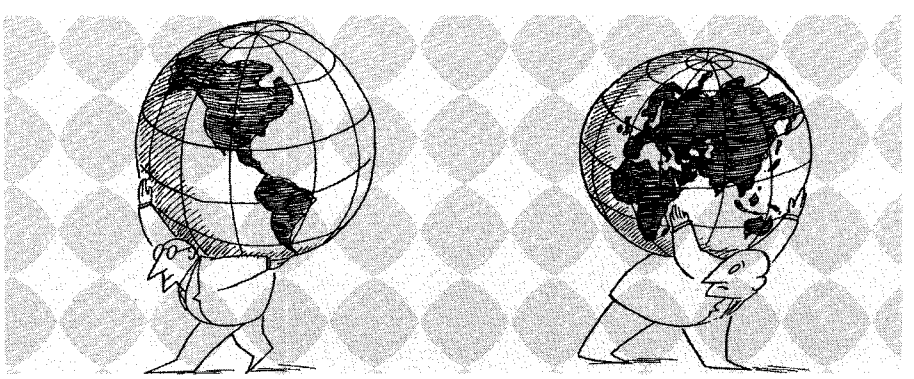
In his apostolic letter on the anniversary of the beginning of World War II, John Paul II took note of the momentous events of this year: "While Europe prepares to put on a new face, while positive developments are happening in certain places in its central and eastern parts, and the leaders of nations collaborate to an even greater degree in solving the great problems of humanity, God is calling his church to make its own contribution to the coming of a more fraternal world."

The papal letter is one of a series of actions of the pope responding to this "call of God" to keep the church at the center of the historical changes marking "the end of the cold war," as it is called today, and the beginning of a new period of international relations. His initiative in commemorating the secular event of the outbreak of World War II is another example of John Paul II's conviction that the church is prepared by its history and called by its vocation to help shape the future direction of the world. In the apostolic letter he clearly manifests a consciousness that his personal history—a participant in both World War II and a pastor at the very core of the cold war struggle in Poland—as well as the Catholic church's pervasive presence in areas of major political and social change (Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Philippines) provide him with a pulpit and a perspective that command an attentive audience in the international community.

The apostolic letter concentrates on the history of Europe, but it inevitably moves beyond history to a reflection on East-West relations today. The letter also draws international attention to Lebanon—a move which seems at first out of context. But this shift of subject matter in fact illustrates a theme which the pope is using his unique pulpit to stress. The theme is the need to connect the top of the international system—the level of superpower politics—with the events at the bottom. It is not a perspective with many supporters so it is useful to consider its meaning.

The apostolic letter reflects this theme but does not explain it. But in his last encyclical, *On Social Concerns* (1987), the pope developed the idea at length. Essentially, his call is to link the East-West dimension of world politics with the North-South issues. The encyclical focused on the history of the problem as John Paul II elaborated a critique of "the logic of the blocs," his description of the cold war struggle. The focus of the critique was the impact of the East-West rivalry on other states and peoples, especially in the developing world. The critique, in turn, was a call for reshaping the East-West competition precisely in the name of its consequences for others. While there is an avalanche of writing today on recasting the U.S.-Soviet relationship, neither the motivation for change nor the consequences of change are usually analyzed in terms of the welfare of the small nations. Indeed the sense of hope which runs through East-West discussions today is seldom reflected in North-South questions of debt, development, and persistent internal or regional conflict.

The papal perspective on appropriate memories and hopes for 1989 directs us, I think, toward a double agenda for foreign policy in the 1990s. The first task is overcoming the legacy of World War II, namely, the cold war between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Here lies the hope of the moment as events occur monthly that most would have thought hardly possible three years ago. There are multiple causes for these profound changes, but the need for internal political and economic change in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe holds a primary place. Those domestic needs have, in part, spawned Mr. Gorbachev's "new thinking" in foreign policy. Professor Seweryn Bialer commented a year ago on the possibilities latent in "new thinking": "'new thinking,' as a process of profound reassessment of the Soviet approach to international relations, has only started. It



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holds the promise of further evolution and long-term change in Soviet international behavior." Bialer's prediction has been validated by the scope and speed of change in Soviet foreign policy: the December 1988 UN address by Gorbachev announcing unilateral reductions of Soviet forces in Europe, the new tone to Soviet diplomacy regarding regional conflicts from Central America to the Middle East, the shifts in Soviet negotiating posture on both strategic and conventional arms, all are signs if not guarantees that the Soviets are prepared to address old issues in new ways.

The first task of foreign policy for the superpowers is to move from the possibilities of change to the reality of change on these questions. The Gorbachev challenge to the United States tests our skills more than our strength. Even as he grapples with failure at home in economic terms, Gorbachev has projected his "new thinking" in global terms as a creative diplomatic agenda. The United States needs to match initiative with initiative on a range of issues: strategic arms reductions, conventional forces in Europe, its view of international organizations, and its proposal for addressing regional conflicts. The point here is not to see superpower politics as a tennis match, but to illustrate a sense of conviction that change from "the logic of the blocs" is possible and the potential of the moment should neither be squandered nor left entirely to others to define.

The second level of foreign policy questions in the 1990s is represented by the pope's reference to Lebanon. Precisely because there is hope, intellectual excitement, and historic possibilities present at the top level of international politics, the danger can be that the Lebanons of the world are simply shut out of the diplomatic agenda. One could envision a world of ordered change on the East-West front, and a world of chaotic violence and desperation in "the South." The future world would be different from the past—not superpower manipulation of small states, but an implicit choice of the East-West powers (including Europe and Japan) to focus on the momentous but manageable change open on the East-West front and to let the South drift and decline. Such an outcome would be no more acceptable morally than "the logic of the blocs." The policy of the 1990s, the pope would remind us, must overcome the cold war, but it also must attend to its consequences in the South. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS John Garvey

MORE THAN WE KNOW

GOD CANNOT NOT LOVE US

There can be an overemphasis on feeling and emotion in religion; but on the other hand there can be too little. It is not wrong of us to expect to have *some* experience of what it means to have faith, to love God, to be loved by God; and just as our experience of a relationship with someone else can and will change over the years, a relationship with God, if it is alive, changes. When religion is reduced to an acknowledgment of a certain set of facts, it is as dead as a marriage which is merely a contract. Some marriages do exist that way, but they are not in a profound sense really marriages. They are certainly not what marriage is meant to be. When Paul compares the relationship of Christ and the church to a marriage, he does not mean a legal contract, but a relationship that involves cherishing, an experience of loving and being loved.

A word as rich as "love" can and ought to mean a number of things. Love means the desire to be with the beloved; a willingness, one that transcends desire, to accept or bring about what is best for the beloved, even where it conflicts with our own desires or interests; a willingness to accept the otherness of the beloved; an emotion of great warmth at the thought of the beloved; a steady attentiveness...the word can mean any or all of these things. And feelings are often involved in what we mean by love because few of us, thinking of those to whom we are bound by whatever it is we mean by love (thinking, for example, of a lover or of our children), feel no emotion at all.

The love of God—both God's love for us and our love for God—is in some ways the same and in other ways radically different from what we usually mean by the word. If a word's ambivalence can sometimes serve us, in this case it can also be profoundly misleading, at least in one sense.

Some part of what we think of as love is fear, fear for the beloved, and fear that the beloved will be taken from us, and there is a consequent grasping. The love we have honestly for God would not be like this, because this relationship, one in which the beloved may be taken from us or leave us, is not true of God.The love we have for God can feel different from other loves because of this. It may not feel as intense as the love which includes fear for the beloved and the fear of losing the beloved, and we may confuse this lack of anxiety with a coolness toward God.

There is something in us that wants to experience the love of God the way we experience the love of someone dear to us, a spouse or child or close friend, but some of what we feel about those loves has to do with their fragility and impermanence. Scripture may tell us that "love is stronger than death," but much of the ferocity of love has precisely to do with the fear that the beloved may be lost. Orpheus pursues Eurydice into the realm of death precisely because of this.

Isn't it true, though, that "perfect love casts out fear"? Maybe. I wouldn't know, personally, because I can't think of one of my children suffering, without fear for that child. Of course my love for my children, for anyone, is far from perfect. But I think of Jesus: weeping at the death of Lazarus, or when "his soul was filled with dismay and dread" at Gethsemane. I think of a friend whose wife's suffering is a source of suffering for him as well, and

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perhaps sometimes a source of fear. Though the metaphors we have for God and our relationship to God are only a beginning, they point us in the right direction. Certainly the fact that we call God our father has to do not only with our dependence on God, our source in God, but also with the helpless love parents have for their children: God cannot *not* love us.

The ambivalence of the phrase "the love of God," which can mean God's love for us or our love for God, reminds me of Meister Eckhart's statement: "The eye with which I see God is the eye with which God sees me." The love of God is transforming—both our love, and God's. We are transformed by loving someone we cannot imagine, by trusting someone we cannot comprehend, by following the clues which reveal a universe created in love, and making the decision that those clues mean something that matters more than the series of clues that point to a meaningless universe, or a universe in which meaning is something humans find, and nothing more, a unIverse where, in the beginning, there was no Word.

God's love, we trust, transforms us as well. Our willingness to trust, to love in the dark after reason and caution give up, is answered by God. It is this answering that makes our love possible. The answer is given before our question. It precedes our love—the Word is there, in the beginning—and gives it birth and form.

The tragedy is that our response, which is something different from our feelings about God or our relationship to God, is so cold and half-hearted. But perhaps this is not *obviously* reciprocated...or the reciprocation is so primary and all-enveloping that we cannot see it. Our lack of a wholehearted response is a way of hedging our bets, thus we live in an attenuated relationship with God—from our side. For us, faith comes down to a hope, sometimes a thin one, that these things are true, and that we will ultimately know this to be the case. Faith no doubt includes that hope, but the faith Jesus tells us about, the faith that moves mountains, is clearly something more than this.

I once met someone who, I believe, had that kind of faith. The contrast between that faith and my own was like the difference between a fire and the blue bead at the end of a wick just before the flame dies. It was an encouraging experience because until that meeting I wasn't aware that this kind of faith is a real human possibility, except in a relatively detached and abstract way.

The fact that the ways we talk about the God revealed to us in Christ and by Christ—as Father, as bridegroom, as husband of the church—reflect aspects of our own experience as parents and husbands and wives can be seen as showing how limited metaphors can be, even where they point us in the right direction. But they can also reveal how shallowly we know our own experience, which is meant to be transformed and deepened as we grow in faith.

Jesus asks, "When the Son of Man returns, will he find faith on earth?" Our ordinary loves are an important part of this. Any compassion at all, no matter how murky, reflects and participates in the love of God. It is important, however, for us to know that this love, even at its most intensely felt, is only the beginning of our potential for responding, and we are meant to be much more than we allow ourselves to imagine. □

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CHALLENGES FACING U.S. CATHOLICS

THE NEXT TEN YEARS

PEGGY ROSENTHAL
KENNETH L. WOODWARD
ABIGAIL McCARTHY
WILLIAM K. REILLY
JOHN J. O'CONNOR
ANDREW M. GREELEY
GEORGE WEIGEL
SUSAN CAHILL
MONIKA K. HELLWIG
JOHN DEEDY
THERESA KANE

Peggy Rosenthal

The next ten years will bring us to the eve of the year two thousand. I shudder to think of all the hype the world is bound to bear during this decade. As American Catholics, we carry for our country a tradition of two thousand years of trying (not always succeeding, but at least trying) to hear the Holy Spirit and pass on its wisdom. "Nothing can do so much for the betterment, the happiness, and the peace of the American people," said *Commonweal*'s first editorial in 1924, "as the influence of the enduring and tested principles of Catholic Christianity." Quaint as that might sound, I think it holds true. A nice way for American Catholics to celebrate *Commonweal*'s sixty-fifth anniversary would be to try to let ourselves be a conduit for that influence through the years until *Commonweal*'s seventy-fifth and the Christian era's (gulp) two-thousandth.

As of this moment, though, we've got a logjam in the flow, a clog that's keeping the wisdom and love of the Holy Spirit from getting through to us. I'm referring to the Catholic campaign against abortion in this country. In our zeal to remove the speck from our prochoice sister's eye, we've done some strange things with the plank in our own. We've stood on the plank to pontificate from it. We've threatened our elected officials that if they don't make it their political plank we'll pull their constituent support out from under them. We've used the plank to build barricades around abortion clinics. In debate, we've hit our opponents over the head with it.

What we haven't yet done—and I think this is the decade's biggest challenge for us—is to take the plank from our eye and build a bridge to the people we've been intimidating. We need to look at their fears, yes; but we also need to let them look at us as we really are. We are a people overpowered by God's love. Struck with awe, like Mary, at the great things the Lord has done for us, we ache with joy at doing great things for others. Individually and institutionally, we give generously to the poor, the sick, the hungry, the homeless...yet we're not perceived by the rest of society as a loving and compassionate people. We're seen as cold, insensitive dogmatists.

No doubt there are historic reasons for this perception of American Catholics. But currently, I'm afraid, our public behavior on abortion bears the blame. (I mean our predominant collective behavior; the few less-doctrinaire Catholics don't alter our main menacing image). Painful as it is, we need to make something like a communal confession. We haven't been loving enough with those who disagree with us. We haven't yet seen how to hold and express deep convictions about the sanctity of life while still embracing the sanctity, the precious holiness of the life of the person who feels threatened by us.

There's no reason why we can't move to an all-embracing view, though. Our "enduring principles," as the 1924 editorial put it, already provide a broader and deeper basis for reconciliation than our rhetoric on this issue has let us see. There's something much deeper at stake than "rights." And if that insipid sounding "respect" is all we have for life, then God help us. Like the normal human beings we are, we've let our slogans get the better of us, let them blind us to the beauty in which we really believe. Our challenge now is to change the terms of the debate—that is, turn them away from hostility toward reconciliation. It's a matter of moving our whole communal vision to that deeper ground where in fact, and in faith, we believe all people are already reconciled: the ground that gives us, day after day, the Bread of Life that nourishes and renews us in love.

Lest this sound a bit mystical, let me suggest a positive goal that I think reflects our Catholic conviction that life is a good gift. Our goal could be a society so life-affirming that, no matter what the law was, abortion, except in rare and tragic cases, wouldn't be something Americans would even consider choosing. Instead of continuing our aggressive lobbying to make abortion illegal, tearing our state legislatures apart and adding to the unbearably ugly name-calling on statehouse steps, we could change

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our legislative aim. We could put our lobbying energy into, say, social policies that would encourage adoption (instead of penalizing families financially as is now the case) and would make sure money and social services were available for any woman who might have chosen abortion because she couldn't manage to raise a child on her own.

These are just a couple of concrete suggestions. What I'm getting at is that we do have a choice. (How silly to have set ourselves against "choice.") And more than the abortion issue will be affected by how we choose here. We have a lot to offer our fellow citizens in the next decade, but our belligerence on this issue has made them, understandably, wary of us. We can hardly do much for "the betterment, the happiness, and the peace of the American people" if they duck for cover when we come.

Peggy Rosenthal is the author of Words and Values: Some Leading Words and Where They Lead Us *(Oxford University Press).*

Kenneth L. Woodward

The most important challenge facing the church in the 1990s is the same challenge it failed to meet in the 1980s and 1970s: passing on the faith and traditions of the church to the next generation. This is a challenge, it seems to me, on which serious Catholics of all ideological bents can agree. It cuts across all the divisions I can think of, clergy-laity, first-third world, Rome-local church, parish-diocese, institutional-personal, not to mention the generations.

To grow up Catholic, you first have to grow up. In this society, at any rate, I see the young captured by a vapid, boring, commercialized youth culture and not interested in becoming adults. Someone has got to show them that adulthood requires character and commitment. Friendship, sex, education, work, creativity, family—these experiences that the young say they want don't just happen. They must be recognized, anticipated, worked for, prized.

For those who experienced them, Catholic schools once worked well in passing on the faith. They did so primarily by providing in successive stages an environment in which the call to discipleship was connected, often unconsciously but just as effectively, to the various stages of adolescence. But today, as then, parochial (inappropriate word) schooling is available to only a minority. What about the majority?

A "universal catechism" won't do it. Neither does CCD. But somehow, parents, teachers, parish workers, clergy, and hierarchy have got to get the message across to young people that to be a Catholic is to be different, certainly different from what the media and malls of the youth culture tell them to be.

What strikes me most about the young Catholics I meet between fifteen and thirty is not only how little they know about their faith but also how much they fail to recognize that, among other things, Christianity offers a critique of their own society and culture. A universal complaint I hear from serious Catholic parents is that they send their children to Catholic universities only to find that "nothing took." They wear their religion like a loose sweat shirt.

We know from studies that our mainline Protestant brethren have utterly failed to pass on the faith. But Catholics have little room to be smug. As Rembert Weakland has observed, "we lost one whole generation." Two would be disastrous.

Kenneth L. Woodward is a senior writer for Newsweek.

Abigail McCarthy

A church is a community of believers. Mindful of that definition I believe that the greatest challenge to the Roman Catholic church in the new decade is to gather, once again—or perhaps truly for the first time—a eucharistic community imbued with a sense of the sacred and transcendent, alive to the continuing presence of Jesus, and thus united in a desire to worship God and love our neighbors as he taught.

It is in eucharistic community that our Catholic identity lies. The words of the third Eucharistic Prayer addressing the all-holy put it that way, "From age to age you gather a people to yourself so that from east to west a perfect offering may be made to the glory of your name." Either we are that people or we are merely an association held together by a decaying organization and dwindling hereditary and historical ties.

It is inevitable that we think of the universal church in terms of its manifestation closest to us—in this case, the church in our country. And here, despite the fact that the number of Catholics is rising because of immigration and conversion, the community centered on the Eucharist seems to be dissolving. Judging a community of the spirit in terms of numbers seems crass but numbers are all we have. For example the diocese of Baltimore, our mother diocese, which counts around 438,000 church members—or nominal Catholics—has reported that attendance at Sunday Mass is down 10 percent in four years from 184,106 in 1984 to 166,297 in 1988. The biggest drop was in the fifteen-to-nineteen age bracket—the bracket in which the future of the community lies.

If young Catholics do not find a source of unity and strength which will enable them to love and serve their neighbors in the community of faith, where will they find it? Certainly not in the contemporary culture of mindless hedonism which seems to breed an alarming callousness in that age group and the one following it. Noting the reaction of the young in the audience at the recent Woody Allen film, *Crimes and Misdemeanors*, which revolves around the theme of justice and God's judgment in an amoral world, Rabbi Eugene Borowitz asks: "Are they—more than a generation removed from the film's central figures and trained at 'winning is the only thing'—too tough-minded, too cynical to expect justice or worry about its absence?" (*New York Times*, October 13, 1989).

Without worship we are distanced from God, the author of justice. Without worship we find no unity. Without unity we cannot leaven the loaf or salt the earth. We must face the fact

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that polarization, divisiveness, and an obsession with our differences have plagued the Catholic community since Vatican II. This has kept us from seizing "the Catholic moment" which Lutheran Pastor Richard John Neuhaus has proclaimed. We can only retrieve that moment if we can find our deep and fundamental unity—first in the Eucharist and then in the demands of love which flow from it. How we do that I do not know. I only know that we must.

Abigail McCarthy is a regular columnist and long-time contributor to Commonweal.

William K. Reilly

I am not sure I know *the* biggest challenge to American Catholics in the next ten years. But there is one issue which undoubtedly will be important to Catholics, indeed, to all Americans: protection of the natural systems that sustain life on this planet. I believe the church would do well to ponder its rich tradition of ethical stewardship of nature, to study and discuss it, to render it relevant to a world in need of a powerful reformulation of the stewardship idea. This tradition goes back at least as far as St. Francis, who saw beauty in nature unaltered. A straight line can be drawn from St. Francis to the American ideal of wilderness.

The bishops of the United States have given us pastorals on the economy and on nuclear arms. I believe a pastoral is needed on nature and stewardship, on our ethical obligations to the earth. The life-affirming qualities of the church are perfectly attuned to help prevent any further disruption of those delicate systems that make life on earth possible for us and for all those who follow.

William K. Reilly is administrator of the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

John J. O'Connor

My comments on challenges to Catholics in the decade ahead would be far more speculative had the Archdiocese of New York not recently come through an extraordinary synod. Preparation for the synod began in 1984 with the distribution of more than two million detailed questionnaires designed to discern "felt needs." For two years, weekly discussions were held in a cross section of parishes concerning the findings of the questionnaires and the applicability of the sixteen documents of the Second Vatican Council to such findings. Eventually, some twenty major categories of concerns emerged, and these, with their subcategories, became the stuff of the archdiocesan synod.

The synod itself was composed of 243 people: lay, clergy, single, married, young, middle-aged, old, poor, wealthy, black, brown, yellow, white, sighted, unsighted, able and disabled. I listened; everybody else talked. When it was all over, there wasn't a shadow of a doubt about the "felt needs" of the Archdiocese of New York. I wouldn't hesitate to call them "challenges" faced by the Catholics of the Archdiocese of New York during the next decade. Here they are in simplified form: the people of the church (that we become truly one as the Body of Christ, one people, with every member perceived as vital); the prayer of the church (that we become a holy people, particularly through the sacramental life of the church); the family and the church (that family life be radically renewed with the help of the community of the church); the education and formation of the church (that we receive the knowledge of the truth for which we hunger and the spiritual formation for which we thirst); the social mission of the church (that we commit ourselves to the poorest of the poor—the materially hungry, the spiritually starved).

Would the same needs be felt by Catholics throughout the United States? I can only speculate, but I would say yes for two reasons: the first is based on my discussions with many bishops, my travels, and on what I read in the newspapers and see on television; the second is the nature of New York itself.

The stereotype of New York is "sin city," Times Square, Harlem, the South Bronx, the Lower East Side, "Skyscrappers" (as Pope John Paul II called them), turbulence, Wall Street, show biz, money. The stereotype is not the reality of New York City, and New York City is not the Archdiocese of New York.

The archdiocese stretches for some 165 miles, from ocean to mountains, from cobblestones to vineyards and cornfields, horse farms and rivers and lakes, cities and towns; it includes the homeless and helpless, the drug-ridden and poverty-stricken, the wealthy, and every conceivable state in between. I honestly don't know many places in the United States not mirrored in some way in the Archdiocese of New York. I therefore suspect that the challenges faced here are fairly reflective of those in the church throughout the country.

The one challenge that emerged from our synod reflections as both overriding and undergirding all others, however, was expressed as a constant plea: "Give us the word of God." It was virtually a cry of anguish. It said: give us the word of God clearly, straightforwardly, unambiguously, and we will use it to address every other need. Give us the word of God, and it will renew our families. With the word of God, we can be serious about poverty and racism, about homelessness and drugs and abortion, about discrimination of every kind. Let us hear the word of God honestly preached, clearly taught in our Catholic classrooms, our catechetical courses. Give us the sacramental word of God in the confessional, in the Eucharist. With the word of God, we can meet every challenge; without it, we are a dead body that only calls itself Catholic."

I believe my people know what they are talking about. I believe my major challenge is precisely to give them the word of God, beginning with the word that every single one of us is an indispensable member of the Body of Christ—each desperately needed by the other, each loved profoundly by the Christ who died for us. Which is another way of saying that we cannot meet any other challenge of our day until we truly come to believe in the worth and dignity and sacredness of *every* human person. The

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word of God tells us that unless we reverence every human person, we will ultimately destroy ourselves with contempt.

I hope we do have a full decade to communicate that word.

Cardinal John J. O'Connor is the archbishop of New York.

Andrew M. Greeley

Without wanting to discount the importance of other issues (especially equal rights for women, including ordination), I propose as the biggest challenge the improvement of the quality of preaching. For most Catholics the church is their parish. Their main contact with the parish is the weekend liturgy and the principal exchange between priest and people is the homily. Research evidence shows that the quality of Sunday preaching is the strongest predictor of strength of affiliation with the church, after the religious behavior of the spouse. Yet most American Catholics give their priests very poor grades on what they consider to be priests' most important role.

Anecdotally one knows that in a group of laity, one merely need raise the question of the quality of preaching and the subject dominates the rest of the evening's conversation. A woman I know summed up the lay reaction perfectly, "Each time a new priest comes to the parish I say to myself that this is the one who will be able to preach a good homily. So far I've been wrong every time."

Yet homiletic training is a minor element in most seminary education and improving the quality of preaching is a minor concern, it would seem, of most priests. Curiously those who are most prone to denounce injustice in the far reaches of the world are not at all concerned about the injustice of bad preaching. Not to put too fine an edge on the subject, the laity have the right in strict, commutative justice to have the Gospel preached to them with skill. The priest who fails to do so has no right to take his salary and, I would think, is bound in justice to restitution.

In response to this argument (which even the most liberal of clerics resent, or so it seems), I often hear it said, "What about the really good priest that everyone loves, but who can't preach very well?" The implication seems to be that there are tens of thousands of such people.

The answer is that preaching is an acquirable skill. Its two major components can be learned through practice. One can learn how to make an adequate presentation of self in a public situation. Politicians do, why not priests? If Richard M. Daley, for example, can by training, effort, and practice become a skillful public performer, why can't a priest do the same thing?

One can also learn creative writing, which is what a homily is. That requires work too, reading, writing, and practice. The creative self lurks in everyone. It springs from very few of us automatically. I have often suggested that access to the creative self ought to be made a condition for ordination (poetry, short stories, art, music, photography, whatever) because the priest who does not have access to this dimension of the self will not be an effective preacher and teacher.

Great preachers may well be born not made. Effective preachers, however, can be made with effort and practice.

The only thing wrong with this challenge is that neither Rome nor the bishops can be blamed for failure to meet it. The laity must demand good preaching; the clergy must provide it. Rome and the bishop (who's probably not much of a preacher either) are irrelevant.

Rev. Andrew M. Greeley is on the staff of the National Opinion Research Center and a professor of sociology at the University of Arizona. He is the author of Religious Change in America *(Harvard University Press) and* Saint Valentine's Night *(Warner).*

George Weigel

The greatest challenge facing American Catholics over the next decade is the same great challenge that has confronted Christians for two millennia: the challenge of fidelity to the Gospel, the celebration of the Eucharist, and the exercise of charity within and without our ecclesial community. Like generations before us, our vocation is to "wait in joyful hope for the coming of the Lord."

But waiting in joyful hope doesn't mean just waiting around. The ancient challenge of Christian fidelity is shaped by the distinctive characteristics of an age. Today, we are living in a kind of pivot: what Jeffrey Stout has called the harvest time of modernity and the seed time for whatever-it-is that will follow modernity. (A hint: whatever else may be on the horizon, it won't be the "end of history," Washington's recent Hegelian fever notwithstanding.) And in this time of in-between, I believe we are called to the recovery and extension of a distinctive Catholic identity: the fundamental prerequisite to evangelization and service.

By "recovery," I mean a Catholic identity rooted in the classic Christological and Trinitarian understandings of the first seven ecumenical councils. The issue of the nineties, in terms of Catholic belief and practice, is not "How little can I believe (or do) and still remain a 'good Catholic'?" The issue, in the pivot, is "How much of this rich tradition of Catholic faith have I made my own, in my mind, my heart, and my behavior?" The deconstructionist impulse that has marked the American Catholic intellectual and activist elite for the past generation has to be rejected. And the obsession we have had with questions of "authority in the church" must give way to a new quest for what is authoritative in our lives: authoritative in terms of the Gospel, and authoritative in terms of the living tradition of the church.

The phrase, "living tradition," gets us to the matter of extension. Catholic deconstructionists and Catholic "restorationists" alike have missed the crucial truth in Jaroslav Pelikan's definition of "tradition" as the living faith of those who have gone before. Deconstructionists who dismiss Paul, Augustine, and the Cappadocian Fathers as impossibly sexist, and restorationists

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who identify "tradition" with practices about as ancient as our great-grandmothers, have both done a lot of damage to a sense of Catholic identity. Repairing the damage will mean—and this is a crucial part of the "extension" of Catholic identity—a renewed commitment to ecumenism, but an ecumenism focused less on institutional issues and more on the recovery and development of the classic Christian tradition as expressed in the *oikumene* of the first seven councils. This will mean extending the ecumenical conversation to include renascent evangelical Protestantism, while intensifying the dialogue with those mainline theologians (such as George Lindbeck, Thomas Oden, Robert Jenson) who are consciously crafting a "postmodern" Christian dogmatics.

Are there appropriate American models for this process of recovering and extending our Catholic identity? I suggest we find them in three of the great figures of our history: John Carroll, Isaac Hecker, and James Gibbons. Each of these men understood that the universality of Catholic truth took on a particularly dynamic expression when mediated through the distinctive experience of being American. Each knew that Rome had much to teach America, and that America had things to teach its elder sister on the Tiber. Each lived, in sum, a creative tension between universality and particularity, by incarnating the classic Catholic tradition in a distinctively American way.

Would turning to Carroll, Hecker, and Gibbons involve a kind of neo-Americanism? Well, as we said in Baltimore during the pennant race this year, why not?

George Weigel is the president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, and the author, most recently, of Catholicism and the Renewal of American Democracy *(Paulist Press).*

Susan Cahill

Holy mother church has been taking it on the chin these years. The bad guys in her ranks have the biggest mouths. They get the headlines. Some American Catholics, women in particular, have a tough time not chickening out. Disaffection, after all, is no sin, no lie. In some contexts, the lack of disaffection means brain death. But memory is a great reviver: "We are our memories," wrote Borges. Remembering helps to refocus vision: the vision of a processive, nurturing mother church generating the works of mercy; the memory of her good and faithful people working to deliver her Holy Spirit in history. In the next decade the challenge is to continue the birthing process, to sustain a corporal and spiritual midwifery that is as fierce a current in the Catholic tradition as are the betrayals, the stillbirths. Role models, the saints and prophets in the church's ranks, abound.

Delivering the poor in the aftershocks of the Reagan-Bushquake will demand the full power of the two-thousand years of experience in the works of mercy. On the eve of the new decade the temptation to cast off mother church's best-beloved, the poor, is couched in verbal constructs claiming realism: "the permanent underclass," "gentrification," "triage." American Catholics must not bite the apple of such academic and pagan seductions; instead, we must continue to construct the church's identity and history. In the 1990s every church worthy of the name should be an arm or a collective healing hand within the already functioning but small-scale Partnership for the Homeless: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, instructing the ignorant. The aftershocks of twelve years of government-blessed greed are going to demand rescues-without-measure.

The works of mercy can only be enacted, in any decade, "at a personal sacrifice," [which] "was considered by the first Christians as the right thing to do," in the words of Peter Maurin. Time, which some say is money, must be sacrificed. For those who choose the work of education in the 1990s, cozy circumstances must be left behind. Poor children, mostly minorities, are dying from neglect and prejudice and unkindness in the classrooms of America's big-city public schools. Teachers who have been baptized into a consciousness of all children as the children of God must sacrifice the securities of small classes, parking lots, and segregated suburban student bodies to serve the children of the urban poor as imaginatively as good-spirited parents and teachers nurture their own children. Teachers who have been confirmed into adult Christian courage must take some responsibility for resisting the spiritual maiming, the bullying, of the dark-skinned and non-English-speaking public schoolchildren by oppressive and corrupt, predominantly white, school systems. Educating poor urban children, teaching them the implications of their humanity, is one of the most challenging projects for Christian workers of the 1990s. Our witness in the public high schools of New York City, for instance, is dim. Having chosen white flight, we offer small, if any, comfort.

"To make of the earth a homeland rather than an exile," to quote Michael Harrington, has always been the processive work of the church compassionate. Her saints have done it down the centuries. In America we can remember—we need to remember—Dorothy Day, Cesar Chavez, Oscar Romero, and, too, the choirs-upon-choirs of anonymous names and voices who have lived their baptism in grace and courage. (So many were teachers.) Their memories help to overcome our private disaffections.

Mine, for instance, derive from a big-brother celibate clergy pronouncing on matters of sex and gender. At the moment their target is condoms within the AIDS-education curriculum; once it was the pill. Maybe it still is. I do not hear such disaffecting pronouncements as responses to the Gospel. Some of them I hear as expressions of misogyny. I have chosen, however, not to read misogyny as a dominant theme of American Catholicism. (I understand the women who hear a different emphasis and have, in conscience, split.) The question at hand, however, has not to do with the psychosexual context of an aging clerical subculture but rather with the continuing challenge of the Incarnation. I imagine it in the 1990s where it happened first, in a city, among the outcast poor and their children.

Susan Cahill is the author of the novel, Earth Angels *(Harper & Row), and editor of the three-volume series,* Women & Fiction *(New American Library), and* Among Sisters: Short Stories by Women Writers *(New American Library).*

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Monica K. Hellwig

From my vantage point the greatest challenge to American Catholics in the next ten years will be linked only in tenuous and indirect ways to questions of institutional structure and of claims to authority. More urgent, I believe, is the issue of what exactly we shall identify as the tradition of our faith and what exactly we shall hand on to the generation that is coming after us to take our place. The Catholic community at-large is breaking away from dogged adherence to formulae of belief and rules of conduct which were accepted uncritically as though understanding were not involved in the matter. But the real question is what is to take the place of the rejected patterns of blind adherence. As I have been able to observe what is going on, there is a small minority of Catholics who are both intellectually curious about their tradition and wholeheartedly committed to it, but there is a large majority who are vaguely holding on and waiting for something more to happen which will make sense of their own fidelity.

It seems to me that there are several reasons for our arrival at this critical juncture. There is, of course, the rapid pace and far-reaching character of the post-Vatican II changes in liturgy, catechesis, and church life. There is a certain sense that so much has changed that there is nothing stable left, and that it is difficult to find a Catholic identity. I myself find the identity by looking along a historical axis for continuity and consistency in the midst of change, but it seems to me that we have not provided ordinary Catholics, unspecialized in theology or church history, the resources with which they might make such discoveries of continuity for themselves. What they tend to see is discontinuity. They may be concerned about it and resist all changes indiscriminately and tend to lose their sense of direction.

Ecumenism and an increased tolerance may be working in the same direction. Without a strong sense of our own identity, based on what is really central to Catholic tradition, ecumenism and tolerance may have a disorienting effect. Here also, I notice, there are two typical reactions from those who do not have a really deep, personally assimilated grounding in the tradition. Either they respond with a sense of panic and resist ecumenical activities and tolerant attitudes as destructive of faith and commitment, or they respond with enthusiasm and assume all truth claims to be irrelevant because religious beliefs and commitments are simply a matter of taste or upbringing.

It is clear that such attitudes of undiscerning acceptance or undiscerning resistance to changes can bring about the gradual loss of the great heritage that is ours to pass on, both for the sake of those who will make up the Catholic community of the future and for the sake of those other Christians and those of other religions for whom the Catholic tradition offers a certain complementarity. And it seems equally clear that loss of the heritage can only be prevented by a far deeper understanding and appreciation than is now being offered. That involves a greater grasp of history, the symbols, the classic texts, the images and stories, and the affective dimensions of the heritage. It seems to me that the greatest challenge to American Catholics in the next ten years is whether we can put ordinary Catholic believers in touch with all these aspects of their heritage in ways that will make the fullness of the heritage their own.

Monika K. Hellwig is professor of theology at Georgetown University and past president of the Catholic Theological Society of America.

John Deedy

It's strange from one who doesn't particularly account himself an institutional type, yet I'd say the biggest challenge in the next decade to the American church, and therefore Catholics themselves, is maintaining an effective institutional presence. In a generation's time, we have seen thousands of Catholic schools closed (the two I attended are now parking lots), convents converted to other purposes, seminary estates sold off to realty developers, hospitals turned over to community boards, publications disappear, even some colleges. One must wonder if it's the parish churches' turn next? Will many be boarded up for lack of priests and because of fewer worshippers? We should begin to know over ten years' time.

Already the term "priestless Sundays" has entered the American Catholic lexicon, and we read of parishes being consolidated, and of rotating pastoral ministries. We haven't reached the point of panic which for some existed when priests and sisters were leaving in droves, schools were shutting one after another, and the whole ball of wax seemed to be coming undone. The situation stabilized. Still, we are at another moment of truth. The pews will never be so full again, after today's senior generations of faithful churchgoers have gone to their reward. But there will be people occupying them. Question: Will their numbers be such as to need as many churches as in the past? Larger question: Will one of the largest and richest churches in Roman Catholicism be reduced to the necessary strategy of a missionary church, importing priests to minister to its congregations?

We're talking about two things here: vocations and religious practice. Whatever the dedication of permanent deacons and lay ministers, as a sacramental church Catholicism cannot get along without priests. The sad reality is that in the United States they are not being produced in anywhere near the numbers needed to care for a community that in nominal figures is 55 million and growing. On the other hand, if cultural Catholicism is the mode of the new generations, will it be necessary to have as many priests as before? Their services will be less in demand, apart from certain rites of Catholic passage, like First Communion, marriage, burial (baptism already having been widely taken over by permanent deacons). But what consolation is it that one problem is eased by another just as serious?

Apropos vocations, no one sees current trends being reversed anytime soon, so it is likely that we will see increasing numbers of foreign priests running American Catholic parishes—including

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priests from Africa, where vocation rates are said to be especially high. It is a circumstance sure to put Catholic racial attitudes to a test, and we'll quickly learn as a church the depth of our professions about equality. Will the archbishop of Boston, for example, dare assign a black pastor to South Boston? Would white parishioners accept a black pastor in places like "Southie"? I wouldn't bet on it.

No less knotty is the issue of observance. Years ago an archbishop of Philadelphia advised against being overly alarmed about the drift of young Catholics from conventional religious practice, saying they'd be back once they were settled into marriage and the raising of families. Right now at least one religious sociologist is heralding their return, although I don't see it. My parish church, for one, is still one of grandparents and grandchildren. But if the new generations are returning, they're undoubtedly doing so on their own terms—which is a mixed blessing for traditionalists and the practice they represent. For it's likely they're returning with the looser concern about dogma and the detachment from church structure that have characterized them to date. They bring a presence, in other words, but along with it nonconforming ideas, and not a whole lot of participation.

Another great challenge resides here. Will the official church accommodate believers who are free-spirited rather than orthodox? Will it allow itself to be reshaped in any significant way by believers formed by symbols rather than a catechetical knowledge of faith? Will this church, handicapped by a shortage of priests, be able to carry on effectively with its more detached membership? What further retrenchments will be necessary?...Questions without answers, right now; challenges with little in history on which to draw.

John Deedy is a former managing editor of Commonweal. *His latest book is* American Catholicism: And Now Where? *(Plenum).*

Theresa Kane

I am pleased to converge with others on the occasion of *Commonweal*'s sixty-fifth anniversary. *Commonweal* has served the pursuit of truth and the advancement of knowledge with endurance and fidelity; I offer my congratulations on this event.

How difficult to articulate the "biggest" challenge! A unique rather than the biggest challenge to "American" Catholics is to be "less American" and more Catholic or, to put it another way, to transcend one's nationality to be truly catholic—to be universal; to be global. I write American in quotes because my travels beyond the borders of the U.S. and my interaction with citizens of other countries is helping me to realize that we as a country and a people claim and proclaim "American" when in reality the total Western Hemisphere—the two continents—are all part of America. So, when I speak of my citizenry or my country, I think U.S.A.; when I sing the song, "America," or use the term, America, I sing, pray, and think Americas—all the peoples of America—North, South, Central, and the Caribbean.

COMING
GREAT BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS!

Catholics who are simultaneously members of the U.S. community and country need to know, reverence, and transmit our cherished traditions of political liberty while never minimizing or sacrificing the deepest aspirations for economic liberty as inscribed on the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your poor, your downtrodden...." To be truly Catholic—to be universal—is to have a profound religious conviction that we are obliged by our catholicity to have a hunger and thirst for justice—a passion for political, economic, and religious justice—not only for citizens of the U.S.A. but for peoples of other nations and other religions also.

Such a perspective transcends nationalism which can become a form of religion. To be Catholic is to claim the Gospel and the life of Jesus as our primary inspiration. As U.S. Catholics we need to be deeply imbued with the Gospel of Jesus—its message and spirit need to be central in our everyday lives and its words need to nourish us at worship and prayer; it will compel us to rethink and redirect our nation's priorities. The Gospel values of nonviolence, disarmament, friendship, service, and equality propel us to challenge the militarization of our nation and our planet; we need to think in terms of a world community of five to six billion people and about 179 nations. If the Gospel message and the life of Christ are the core of our catholicity, we are not afraid of questions about women and men being one in church and society, ministering and administering as equal, mature, adult friends and partners—challenging and eradicating structures and beliefs about patriarchy in church and society. If canon law is rewritten in the spirit of the Gospel message and not as a reproduction of European, Roman social laws, we will begin to disarm personally, socially, and institutionally—thus fulfilling the Gospel message, "see these Christians, how they love one another."

I am convinced that our world is coming to a new consciousness about nonviolence, peace, and feminism—the antithesis to sexism and patriarchy. Such a consciousness is beginning to pervade Catholics in the U.S. and elsewhere. A new consciousness about ourselves, our planet, and our relationships with each other which transcends nationalism, racism, classism, and sexism compels us to become one world with God, with liberty and justice for all—women and men; rich and poor; citizens of different nations; members of diverse religious beliefs. Such a consciousness is not without pain and struggle, but it enables us to be more humane—more civilized—one to the other, and in so doing, to become more God-like, more divine—the central object of religion and of Catholicism.

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JOIN IT, WORK IT, FIGHT IT

AMERICAN CATHOLICS & THE AMERICAN WAY

DAVID J. O'BRIEN

For Irish Catholics in Massachusetts, one rare highlight of the 1988 presidential campaign came when George Bush somehow managed that wonderful photo opportunity with Lou Holtz and Notre Dame's number one football team. Bush supporters loved it, but his opponents were even more grateful because the event triggered a Mike Barnicle column in the *Boston Globe* calling down curses on Notre Dame (and on Boston College whose students had just paid Oliver North a $25,000 lecture fee). "The only thing the Fighting Irish Catholics in this country fight for these days is the right to go shopping," wrote Barnicle. "They go out, score in places like the bond market, which is a haven for kleptomaniacs with business degrees, then pray that someone will mistake them for Republicans as they sing psalms to greed." Barnicle talked it over on the phone with Mario Cuomo, who was angry over Bush's appearance at Christ the King High School in Brooklyn, where he accepted the shield of a slain policeman and, in Cuomo's words, "screamed for the death penalty." Cuomo concluded that there was a Catholic, not just an Irish-Catholic, problem: "It's time for questions within our church about what we believe, how consistent we are. Questions that are provocative and embarrassing."

As Cuomo and Barnicle well know, the questions are being asked, and have been for some time. The trouble is that the answers are all over the lot, ranging at least from Archbishop John Whealon's well publicized 1988 switch to the GOP to Bishop Thomas Gumbleton's dedication to near universal reform. Signs are already appearing that internal Catholic divisions will be even more evident in upcoming state-by-state battles over abortion. U.S. Catholics are deeply divided, not only about parties, policies, and candidates, but over the most basic questions of the church's public role.

Of course, current uneasiness can distort historical memory: the unity of the past was more apparent than real, and today's differences have roots in a heritage of differing, sometimes conflicting, traditions. In the United States, Catholics grappled with the unique circumstances created by the disappearance of religious establishments, the guarantee of free exercise of conscience, and the rich pluralism of Christian voices and communities. At least three distinct, sometimes overlapping, forms, or styles, of public presence emerged. These can be labeled, for purposes of this essay, "republican," "immigrant," and "evangelical." These terms have special meanings here, and the typology itself is an abstraction, derived from, but perhaps also imposed on the historical record. There were and are few pure examples of any one of these styles, but they do illuminate tendencies that have been—and remain—operative in the process of defining a public presence for the church and its people. Each was intended to enable the church to be faithful to its distinctive mission as a church and, at the same time, to be a responsible participant in a democratic culture. These styles, or traditions, are not easily integrated; perhaps they should not be.

The republican position arises from concern, professed or real, for the *res publica*, the public "thing." It represents a deliberate (though not necessarily ultimate) acceptance of religious pluralism, which, because it prevents the monopoly of culture by any particular religion, requires ongoing mediation between religious and civic obligations. It is the stance of relatively successful persons and organizations who recognize that their interests and ideals differ from those of others, so that, for the sake of the common life, some particular concerns must be modified, others negotiated.

The immigrant style also arises from the experience of pluralism, but here the focus is less on the public good, with its accommodation and negotiation, than the good of the group. Churches, like other institutions, have to organize to protect their interests; ethnic and working-class groups must do the same. The effectiveness of such organizations depends on their ability to claim the support of their people. Emphasis on this institution, or this group, does not automatically exclude concern for the common good, but unity, strength, and morale usually require particular concerns to override appeals to the public interest.

The third style, a Catholic form of evangelicalism, is a more recent phenomenon. Its adherents find the republican style too temporizing, the interest-group style too selfish. Instead, they would measure culture, society, and politics by Christian standards

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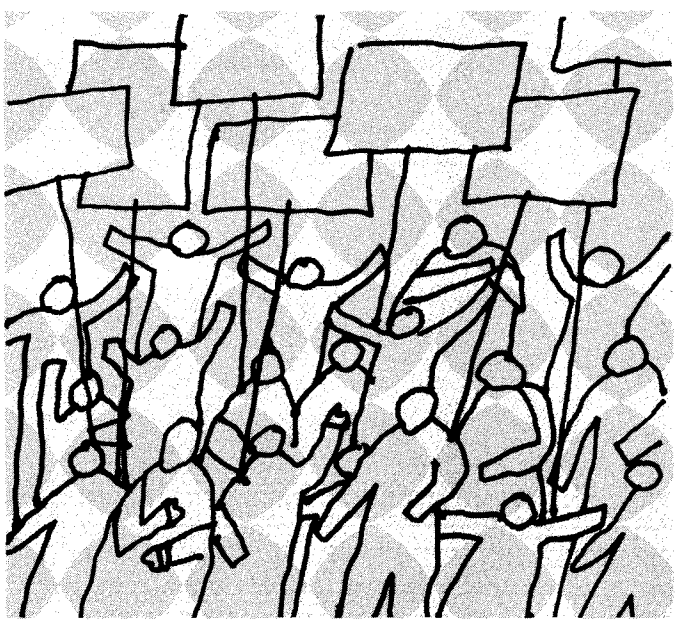
and act directly on the result, without the mediation of citizenship or group interests.

Until the 1960s, most Catholic politics involved an interplay of the first two styles, with bishops upholding republican civic virtues in theory, occasionally winning respect and access by doing so, but adopting the interest-group approach in practice. Catholic participation in political machines, trade unions, and community organizations represented clear expressions of the immigrant, interest-group style. During moments of perceived crisis, however, embattled immigrants appealed to the Bill of Rights, and machine politicians and ethnic leaders sincerely proclaimed their devotion to shared ideals and the public interest.

Both approaches required some modification of Gospel ideals and Catholic claims. Republicanism meant acceptance of civil and social equality with non-Catholics, thus assisting the assimilation of Catholic outsiders. The immigrant style more or less excluded loving concern for those outside the group, but it was an appropriate means of securing institutional and group interests. Neither provided powerful moral or emotional support for challenging, much less transforming, the common life, but a church and a people on the move hardly noticed.

In the wake of Vatican II, however, unavoidable moral issues like racism, imperialism, nuclear deterrence, and abortion drew from the margins of Catholic life a more explicitly religious stance. While few Catholics joined the Catholic Worker or the various resistance, peace, and social justice movements, many did respond to a spirituality which called for fundamental commitment to the Gospel and the witness of Jesus, and reflection on that commitment in light of the all too obvious evils of contemporary society. The result was a new sense of distance from American culture, and a renewed determination to salvage the credibility and integrity of Catholic Christianity. As the American bishops put it in their 1983 letter on nuclear weapons, Christian discipleship in "a society increasingly estranged from Christian values" requires an "adult" Christian community notable for its renunciation of prevailing values. A similar countercultural spirit informed the pastoral and reflective sections of the bishops' economics letter three years later.



Such apparently radical, even sectarian, appeals punctuate documents notable for their manifestly republican concern for public morality and policy. The combination of evangelical zeal and republican civility, in turn, appears at a time when prominent bishops like Archbishop Whealon and Boston's Cardinal Bernard Law make an interest-group approach to abortion their dominant form of public witness. No wonder Barnicle is angry and Cuomo thinks Catholics have to face some hard questions.

It might be helpful to look briefly at the historical origins of these three styles. Republicanism was influenced by the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on reason, its optimism about humankind, and its insistence on civility, toleration, and common sense. For the early Anglo-American Catholics like the Carrolls, such values were prescriptions for family and group survival. The formative years of the American church were dominated by independent men committed to republican ideals. Later converts like Orestes Brownson and Isaac Hecker were attracted by Catholic authority, but both took for granted (as so many European Catholics did not) the need, in principle, to respect freedom of conscience and to subject Catholic claims to the discipline of reasonable public discourse. The individual Catholic, and in a certain sense the church, was both American and Catholic. The requirements of citizenship and discipleship could conflict, but the person—and the church—could live with integrity by subjecting both citizenship and discipleship to tests of reasonableness, using especially the resources of natural law. The republican was a lay style because the tensions were more immediate for lay persons, immersed each day in the secular, pluralistic experience of business, labor, and government, than for those whose lives centered more exclusively on the church and the Catholic community. Republicanism was, and remains, an appealing position for those who have come to feel at home in this country, and thus to feel a sense of personal responsibility for public life, political, social, and cultural.

At times, advocates of republicanism segregated religious from civic loyalties, and limited the jurisdiction of church teaching to religious as distinct from economic or political affairs. This was true of lay Catholics anxious to avoid having their consciences pricked on slavery, the exploitation of labor, or racial segregation. But it was also true of churchmen who placed institutional interests first, as when Bishop John England of Charleston submitted to pressure to close a school for black children, or when later bishops avoided confronting racial segregation for fear of dividing the flock. But, at its best, the republican tradition occupied without apology that tense but potentially creative mediating ground between an increasingly isolated church and an increasingly pluralistic and "secular" culture (the location associated in Europe with liberal Catholicism). Its advocates believed that America had something to teach the church. Brownson (at

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times), Hecker, Archbishop John Ireland, all believed that the United States represented the leading force of modern history: where it was going, all would follow. Here the church could, and must, learn how to deal with individual and group liberty, popular participation, and industrial civilization. The success of the American church demonstrated that people could be trusted, that Catholic faith could survive, even prosper, in an atmosphere of contentious pluralism, and that ecclesiastical authority over church members could be exercised more fully and directly when church and state were freed from one another. Later republicans like John A. Ryan and John Cogley were less messianic, but they too believed that the American experience of the church taught universal lessons. John Courtney Murray, for example, began his long years of work on religious liberty by arguing simply that the American arrangements of church and state deserved at least the degree of approval accorded those of Spain; he lived to make the case for religious liberty and church-state separation as normative for the church at large.

At their best, republicans also believed that Catholics had something to teach the nation. No one wanted more passionately to make America Catholic than Hecker, precisely because he believed that Catholic doctrine and sacraments could provide the needed, and missing, spiritual foundation for the national experiment in freedom. This faith fueled the movement called Americanism in the late nineteenth century; when it was condemned, this confidence in the possibility of a Catholic America was among the casualties. Twentieth-century republicans worked hard to make Catholicism civil and reasonable, and to persuade the universal church to acknowledge modern ideals of liberty and democracy, but they seemed to lose faith in the possibility of Catholicism offering something uniquely important to American culture. Understandably concerned to Americanize an immigrant church, loving their country perhaps too much, they sometimes forgot the need to evangelize America. In doing so, they left a vacuum which, when it became evident, was filled by Catholics less concerned with the common life, more concerned with the life of the church.

Where republicanism mediated between the particular preoccupations of the church and the more general concerns of the public, the immigrant tradition gave priority to Catholic needs and interests. The rapidly growing church had few resources of wealth or personnel and faced anti-Catholicism without and ethnic conflict within, so that a more self-interested style of public presence than that of the wealthy Maryland planters was understandable enough. New York's Archbishop John Hughes taught his people that they must rely on their own resources if they were to prosper. In addition, they could best defend themselves against anti-Catholic enemies by uniting behind their bishop, supporting their own schools, and treating non-Catholic appeals to the public interest with suspicion. Hughes and churchmen like him understood that the formal freedom granted by the Constitution could only be put into practice by a church which had the power to act, and he instinctively grasped the means to secure such power. What was effective for this self-making institution worked as well for many of its people. Nationality, language, and class as well as religion kept them outside the dominant culture. Local and state governments did little to relieve poverty or to ease the adjustment of newcomers to the almost anarchic cities. But these immigrant workers were peasants, with few illusions about public life. They knew that power mattered, and that rewards came to those who were shrewd, tough-minded, and dedicated to their own survival. Thus they adapted relatively easily to interest-group politics and to the economic marketplace. Ethnic assocations, political machines, trade unions organized on the self-interested terms of Samuel Gompers's "business unionism," all were structures which emphasized unity, loyalty, and self-centered devotion to particular interests and ideals.

For some Catholics, the immigrant approach was too selfish. They could not be satisfied with the subculture the church's leaders constructed to preserve the faith and insure institutional survival. But neither could they accept the dualism of a republican tradition that seemed to require polite neglect of Christian ideals as the price of participation in public discourse. Such persons sought a reintegration usually found in the religious life. In the 1930s the Catholic Worker movement of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin began to construct on such foundations another form of public Catholicism. Practicing voluntary poverty, experimenting with utopian alternative communities, and offering a witness of Christian nonviolence to war and the arms race, the Catholic Worker represented the appearance of an evangelical style in American Catholicism.

Since Vatican II, the three distinct approaches to the public presence of the church have persisted, but the balance among them has shifted dramatically. The most dynamic and influential is now the evangelical. Catholic faith and piety, like that of other American Christians, is increasingly centered on the Scriptures and the person of Jesus. While public debates continue to feature discussion of papal teaching, church documents are less significant than the Scriptures and works of piety that emphasize Christian discipleship. And, as happened among Protestants, social responsibility has come to be seen in personal terms. The question is less "what does the church teach?" than "what would Jesus do?" In their 1983 pastoral on nuclear weapons, the bishops came close to endorsing this position by emphasizing the dramatic demands of the Gospel, affirming nonviolence as an option for individuals, and calling their people to a discipleship that might include several forms of conscientious objection. In their later pastoral letter on economics, they recommended a "fundamental" or "preferential option for the poor," not only as a requirement of Christian discipleship but as a guideline for economic policy.

The reason for the resurgence of this more radical language was the apparent inadequacy of republican categories in the face of spiraling problems of violence and injustice. To take but one example, in 1961 *America* magazine published an article justifying the use of force to keep neighbors from invading one's fallout shelter in the event of nuclear war. In reaction, writing to peace movement leader James Forest, Thomas Merton exclaimed: "Are

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we going to minimize, and fix our eyes on the lowest level of natural ethics, or are we going to be Christians and take the Gospel seriously?" In John Courtney Murray's advanced version of the republican tradition, natural law ethics provided no leverage for bringing about the kingdom of God, only for establishing minimal levels of decency. Neither did it provide an emotionally compelling ground for resistance to evil. Indeed Murray himself had argued that because limited nuclear war might be necessary, it must be justified. Merton posed his question about this "lowest level of natural ethics" and asked about the Gospel in 1962. In the years that followed, he and others would ask similar questions about racism, about the Vietnam war, about world and domestic poverty, and finally about the nuclear problem, which by the 1980s seemed to carry the very fate of creation. In the face of such issues, the republican style seemed inadequate.

The strength of the evangelical approach is its appeal to integrity, calling the church and its members to live out their faith and bear witness to the demands of Christianity. It exposes the impersonal character of the state and public life, condemns a spiritually empty pursuit of material self-interest, and expands the social imagination to embrace all human persons, including society's outcasts and unfortunates. It advocates fidelity to principle over pragmatic considerations. The evangelical style challenges the concern with effectiveness that marks republican and immigrant styles. "We believe that success, as the world determines it, is not the criterion by which a movement should be judged," the Catholic Worker maintains. "The important thing is that we adhere to these values which transcend time and for which we will be asked a personal accounting, not as to whether they succeeded...but as to whether we remained true to them even though the world go otherwise."

The weakness of the evangelical approach is that, by defining issues and responses in Christian terms, its proponents become marginalized in the larger public debate. Respected, even admired,

Who was who

John Carroll, first bishop, later archbishop, of Baltimore, came from the well-connected Maryland Carrolls, who included Charles, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and Daniel, participant in the Constitutional Convention. While John Carroll supported the Revolution and Constitution, he was personally rather conservative, sympathizing more with the upper-class Federalists than with Jefferson's more populist Republicans.

John Hughes, archbishop of New York from 1838 through the Civil War, vigorously asserted episcopal authority within the church, attempted to use Catholic power to promote church interests, and befriended Whig politicians he thought might help break the Democratic party's stranglehold on the Irish Catholic vote. Few bishops ever matched Hughes's political activism.

Orestes Brownson was one of the nation's best-known intellectuals when he shocked his friends by becoming a Catholic in 1845. Thereafter he was an untiring champion of the Catholic faith. His politics changed frequently. In 1840 he wrote an almost Marxist attack on capitalist exploitation of industrial workers but in later years he was skeptical of popular pretensions and doubted that republican institutions could survive without the sanctions and authority of the church. His friend **Isaac Hecker,** founder of the Paulists, pursued precisely this goal of uniting American ideals and Catholic faith. His evangelical appeals for a truly American Catholicism, which would in turn make the United States, and eventually the whole world, Catholic, influenced **John Ireland,** the charismatic archbishop of St. Paul. Ireland raised a storm in Europe and the United States by defending democratic political institutions and calling upon the church to adapt to modern civilization. After Pope Leo XIII condemned such "Americanism" in 1899, liberal Catholics were forced to speak within the narrower confines of a clerical, defensive subculture.

John A. Ryan was the first priest to be an official spokesman for the hierarchy on social and political issues. He served from 1919 to 1945 as director of the Social Action Department of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, predecessor of today's United States Catholic Conference. An untiring champion of social reform legislation, Ryan was termed by critics "the Right Reverend New Dealer." His contemporary, **Dorothy Day,** convert and cofounder of the Catholic Worker movement, had little use for political action or legislation; instead, she called for personal commitment and practice of the works of mercy and justice. **John Courtney Murray** was best known as the theological champion of religious freedom.

Through *Commonweal* editor and later *New York Times* religion editor **John Cogley,** Murray's ideas influenced John F. Kennedy's articulation of church-state issues in the 1960 campaign. Murray also defined the still dominant terms of Catholic debate on a variety of public policy issues. **Thomas Merton** converted to Catholicism before World War II and entered a Trappist monastery. His *Seven Storey Mountain* was a runaway postwar bestseller. In the 1960s, he became an eloquent and cogent critic of modern culture and American society. Merton struggled less with immediate political matters than with the challenges posed by the evil and suffering of the twentieth century. In many ways, the Trappist Merton and the Jesuit Murray defined the alternative poles within which serious American Catholic commentary on politics and culture has moved for a generation.

D.J.O'B.

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they are not seen as offering an appropriate or reasonable way in which the American public as a whole can evaluate problems and formulate solutions. If social problems are at least in part problems of power, organization, and institutions, and if they almost always intersect with government policy, a pluralistic society simply cannot deal with those problems in explicitly Christian terms. Nor can the individual citizen effectively participate in the public debate, persuade non-Christians, or indifferent ones, or influence the larger culture by appealing to the authority of the Gospel.

On its own, then, evangelical Catholicism challenges the church, but limits the audience, restricts the language, and shortcircuits a sense of responsibility for the common life, tending toward a perfectionism, even an apocalyptic sectarianism, that questions the legitimacy of all secular institutions, devalues citizenship, and reduces the moral significance of work, politics, and community life. At its worst, in the watered-down version that has worked its way into popular piety and educational materials, it slips into a soft sentimentality that excuses inaction on public issues by arguing that until people decide to be good, reform will not be possible. "That one should work first for the moral reform of individuals before seeking political and economic reform is altogether too simple and superficial," John A. Ryan once told a friend discouraged by economic and racial injustice. "Those who advocate this course are either persons who haven't taken the trouble to analyze the possibilities and implications of the moral reform proposal," or who don't really want reform at all.

Interest-group Catholicism, or the immigrant style, did not disappear with the assimilation of European immigrants. In fact, it has experienced a revival among newer migrants, most notably Hispanics. Community organizing—grass-roots empowerment of poor people and minorities through self-help organizations built up in neighborhoods or among ethnic and racial groups—remains the major form of Catholic social action, reflecting the legacy of Catholic experience in parishes, political machines, and trade unions. Unfortunately, there has been little theological reflection on this uniquely American form of social action. Interest- group practice among Catholics rarely appealed to interest-group theory, probably because that theory conflicts so directly with Christian ideals and natural law teaching. From both the republican and evangelical perspectives, community organizing, like self-interest politics and conflict-oriented unionism, seems unduly to compromise both Christian and civic ideals. But disdain for this dimension of the American heritage reflects a continuing ambivalence about democracy and a failure among evangelicals and republicans alike to come to grips with the contentiousness, ambiguity, and frequent unreasonableness of practical democratic politics.

The strength of the immigrant style is its recognition of how often the moral dimension of an issue is irrelevant in practice. When Americans differ over the moral aspects of a problem, government can't act effectively to resolve it. The problem of labor's right to organize was not resolved by a moral decision to recognize that right, but by labor mobilization, posing a threat to labor peace, community order, and successful anti-depression policy, while taking advantage of an anti-business climate to influence public opinion in a pro-union direction. Civil rights legislation became possible only when a widespread national consensus developed. The civil rights movement reached deep into the churches and drew on the evangelical heritage, so strong among American Protestants, and it regularly explained how its program would be good for the nation as a whole, but it succeeded by focusing directly on the facts of racism and black oppression. Even when a moral consensus emerged, black leaders had learned from long experience that issues are resolved finally by the relative power that groups can exert in the legislative and administrative process. Public opinion—more broadly, culture—is itself an arena of combat; groups can and do mobilize to influence popular perceptions and judgments. Neither the evangelical emphasis on Gospel fidelity nor the republican emphasis on civic mindedness directly confronts these problems of power.

The weakness of the immigrant style is self-evident. To the faithful evangelical, it seems cynical: what would Jesus have to do with organizing groups to pursue their own interests? To the republican, the immigrant style seems divisive as well: the business lobbyist and labor organizer seem equally abhorrent to the citizen concerned with the public good. When the advocate of group interests is a church leader, the problem is even more evident. John Hughes was the first bishop to mobilize Catholics for public goals; later church leaders, while professing to be aloof from politics, occasionally used their influence to seek aid for parochial schools, to resist changes in legislation regarding birth control, or to insure that Catholic interests were respected in welfare legislation. In 1968, Cardinal Krol of Philadelphia seemed to favor the election of Richard Nixon because he supported aid to private schools; four years later he and several other bishops leaned in Nixon's direction because of his professed opposition to abortion. In 1976, despite public statements that insisted on a multi-issue, republican approach to the election,

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the bishops aroused widespread criticism by appearing to test candidates Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter on their views of abortion. In 1984, several bishops similarly challenged the abortion views of vice-presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro and New York Governor Mario Cuomo, both Catholics.

Unfortunately, until recently the case was rarely argued in republican terms; by insisting on a ban on all abortions, the bishops in question allowed no room for compromise and almost never paid attention to problems of enforcement. Instead, when the church acts from the immigrant perspective, as it did in these cases, it seems compelled to escalate the moral language, making the policy it promotes appear to be directly related to Christian belief, and therefore to paint opponents as anti-Catholic or anti-Christian. It also must argue that its position corresponds with the public interest, that what is good for the church is good for the community. It thus risks appearing self-righteous and authoritarian, and often appears more concerned with vindicating its own rights and commanding recognition than with doing something about the issue itself. When an issue like abortion becomes defined as a Catholic issue and a test for the Catholic politician, the church ends up in the same position as the evangelicals, marginalizing its voice and restricting its potential influence by the sectarian strategy of loyal witness.

Yet, the immigrant, interest-group style persists, evident in the work of Catholic lobbying agencies, in the assertion of single-issue absolutes, and in persistent efforts to mobilize poor and working-class people around bread-and-butter economic objectives. The once common blend of internal conservatism and external championing of labor and minority interests is reappearing in places like Los Angeles. From a public point of view, this style is ordinarily divisive, and rather deliberately so. Better, it forces to the surface, makes public, divisions and conflicts that already exist.

The evangelical style is also divisive in principle. Avery Dulles, whose essay on the church as a community of disciples is an important mainstream expression of this style, argues that distance from the culture must be part of the very self-constitution of the contemporary church. Catholics remain, as they must, strangers in the land. For those who despair of the Enlightenment project, for those who no longer believe in the possibility of a common language and therefore an authentically common life, the development of Catholic evangelicalism is promising, for it allows the emergence of at least small communities of witnesses to the Christian message. But there can be little doubt that, taken apart from the republican tradition, its capacity to unify American political culture and underpin an authentic common life is limited.

All contemporary Catholics acknowledge the basic shift of Vatican II with respect to the church's public presence. First, the council, by endorsing church-state separation, detached the church from particular regimes and allowed the claim that the church has no political agenda of its own. Second, the council reattached the church to the political order around four mandates considered essential to its very existence as church: the promotion of human dignity, the defense of human rights, the building up of the unity of the human family, and the search for meaning in human affairs. But, in the United States, with a longer experience of detachment from regimes, it has long been clear that such a formulation is necessarily problematic: as an institution with concrete interests, the church indeed has a political agenda of its own; as a community of moral discourse, it may at times also have a serious obligation to promote a specific moral position. Furthermore, human rights, human dignity, and human solidarity, however compelling as moral norms, can generate at best negative consensus: something is wrong and something must be done about it. What that something is is ordinarily the political issue, and on that question the church does not have, or claim to have, the answer. So, even if people take church teaching seriously, divisions are natural and necessary. The problem is how the clarification of consensus and the debate about differences can be made constuctive, both within the church and in the civil community.

To this problem, the pastoral letters of the U.S. bishops sought to make a contribution. The "two styles of teaching" outlined in the peace pastoral show the influence of the evangelical revival, while at the same time bringing the republican tradition up to date. One style, addressed to members of the church, begins with the message of Jesus and explores the responsibility of Christians. The tone of this theological and pastoral discussion is radical and demanding, tending toward nonviolence and calling for a separation from social values and practices that contradict the Gospel. The second style, directed at the general public, is intended to contribute to the development of the public moral consensus, to influence public opinion, to help shape the public debate about policy by clarifying its moral dimension. Here the language is that of natural law, human dignity, and human rights. These sections of the document are carefully nuanced, their conclusions tentative, the language guarded, most dramatically in the "strictly conditioned moral acceptance of deterrence." In similar fashion, the economics pastoral, in its several drafts, moved from a Vatican II emphasis upon work in everyday occupations as the locus of the pursuit of holiness to a more evangelical emphasis on family and church as repositories of countercultural values standing in opposition to the dominant values of American society. There are appeals for ethical behavior and serious proposals for national policy, but the religious language and symbols are confined to the internal, explicitly religious "style of teaching," suggesting unintentionally that public life is devoid of spiritual and religious significance.

But of course public life is religiously significant, and there can be no escape from public Catholicism, for even a religion that professes to confine itself to spiritual matters influences the larger society by that very stance. If interest-group and evangelical Catholicism seem to exclude authentically public concerns—the one for the sake of integrity, the other for the sake of effectiveness—the republican style, reborn in the pastoral letters, Cardinal Bernardin's "seamless garment," Archbishop Weakland's "economic democracy," and the work of J. Bryan Hehir, David Hollenbach, and John Coleman, takes those con-

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cerns very seriously. They regard continuing efforts to renew and apply a public moral consensus as an essential element of church responsibility in a pluralistic society. Indeed, on this point, there is agreement between such men and critics like George Weigel, Michael Novak, and Richard Neuhaus. But the Bernardin-Weakland outlook also affirms the possibility of evangelical radicalism. Committed to building the public moral consensus, they are equally committeed to strengthening the church's witness to the Gospel, to preserving the integrity of the community of faith. To use the teminology of Max Weber, their project would affirm both a "politics of ultimate ends" and a "politics of responsibility," to embrace if possible both Dorothy Day and John Courtney Murray. More than the self-proclaimed realist critics mentioned above, the writers of the pastorals and their advisers would challenge the drift of public policy and culture; more than evangelical purists, they would acknowledge responsibility for what already exists and for what will be.

Whether this effort represents a bonding or a mere mixing of styles remains to be seen. What deserves notice is that it necessarily places the laity, "citizens of two cities," at the center of the church's life and mission. John Courtney Murray argued that the church-state question had been transformed from an institutional question to a question of conscience, so that Christian influence on public life depended less on the institutional church and the hierarchy than on "the quality and credibility of Christian witness in secular society." The problem is that disputes over public issues appear irrelevant to the experiences of most Catholics, who remain largely unfamiliar with church teaching in these areas. Their pastors, for the most part, are only slightly more conversant with the teaching, and often sadly lacking in the knowledge of public issues. J. Bryan Hehir places the pastoral letters in this context. The church's ability to influence public policy, he argues, depends on its "capacity for moral persuasion of its own community and of the civil community." The goal is to make the church "a community of conscience, a body of citizens with a commitment to human rights and a concept of social justice which allows them to make concrete judgments of where and how to stand on questions of legislation, social policy, and specific choices facing their neighborhood and nation." For this to happen, Catholics must become convinced that public policy issues "are the business of the Christian community as part of [its] faith commitment." The goal must be the nurturance of a body of lay people who seek to live with integrity as Christians and responsibly as citizens. The emphasis must fall on the Catholic member of the school board, the Catholic professional, executive, teacher, labor leader, or social worker, rather than the Catholic Worker or the lay director of religious education, important as such persons may be to the life of the church.

One suspects that, in the future, public Catholicism will not be contained exclusively in any of the three approaches discussed in this essay. The force of evangelical Catholicism will undoubtedly grow as the realities of voluntarism assert themselves more fully among Catholics. Republican ideals have always dominated episcopal political thought; whatever cost they may exact in terms of accommodation, they seem inseparable from the experience of pluralism. The immigrant style will persist as long as there are groups in need of power, as long as the church feels insecure about the integrity of its witness to specific Catholic values or teachings, as long as the church needs to act as an organized institution to protect its interests and promote its ideals. Evangelical Catholicism flourishes in movements; republican Catholicism lives most fully in the midst of society; immigrant Catholicism comes to life in the church's own works of mercy and justice. The evangelical warns others of the dangers of accommodation and of self-interest; the institutional leader reminds others of the importance of organization and resources; the republican warns against sectarianism and self-isolation.

Whether the future development of public Catholicism is constructive, making a substantial contribution to the nation and the universal church, or simply further fragments the American church and weakens its witness and influence, depends, in the end, on attitudes toward history, toward the human community, and most important toward American society and culture. If Catholics and their church can learn to understand and appreciate their history, if they can come to feel that this land, where they live, is their own, for which they are responsible, if they can come to see themselves as part of an American as well as a Christian people, then they may indeed help enliven public life and restore a sense of public responsibility in American institutions. The story of American Catholicism is not yet finished. The next chapter remains to be written. □

The Catholic Church and Politics in Nicaragua and Costa Rica

PHILIP J. WILLIAMS

Williams compares the role of the church in two very dissimilar political contexts—Nicaragua and Costa Rica—but finds the church's response to social change remarkably similar. In both countries, the efforts of the progressive religious and clergy have been largely blocked by church hierarchs fearful of threats to the church's influence. Based on first-hand research, this is an important contribution to the current debate over Central America.

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PREACHING THE WORD & DOING IT

BLACK CATHOLICS IN AMERICA

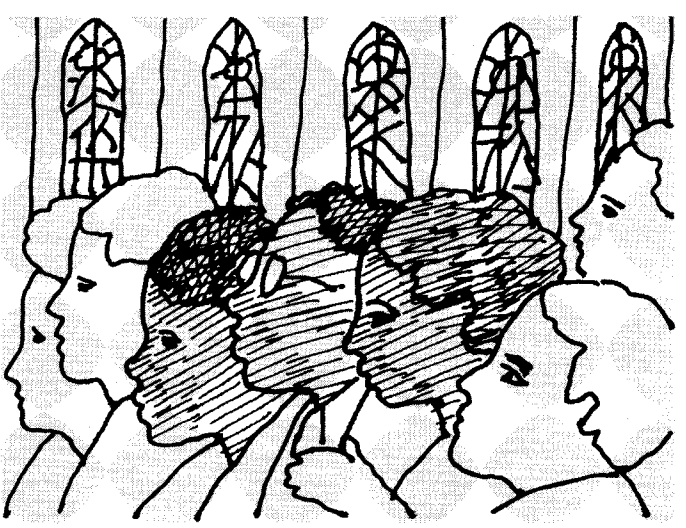
ALBERT RABOTEAU

There is a common tendency among Americans, black and white, even among those who should know better, to think of black Catholics as an anomaly. Black Catholics have been invisible to historians of American Catholicism and to historians of African-Americans, because they assumed that being black meant being Protestant. After all, has not the broad mainstream of African-American culture been overwhelmingly Protestant? Spirituals, gospel music, emotionally expressive styles of worship, chanted preaching—what did these have to do with Roman Catholicism? In addition, the minority status of black Catholics contributed to their invisibility to historians. Indeed, black Catholics constituted a double minority: a racial minority among their fellow Catholics, they formed a religious minority in the black community. Religiously and racially they seemed marginal to the story.

In fact, however, there is nothing anomalous about the identification of African-Americans with Roman Catholicism, nor have black Catholics been marginal to the history of America. The origins of African-American culture began in that historic confluence of peoples that started in the fifteenth century to create what became the Atlantic World. The initial step toward the creation of that world began in the 1440s when Portuguese explorers and adventurers first came into contact with sub-Saharan Africans on the west coast of the land they called Guinea. By the time of Columbus's voyages, contact between Portuguese Catholics and West Africans was extensive. In 1491 the feudal lord of the Kongo, Nzinga a Nkuwu, converted to Catholicism, taking the baptismal name of Joao I, and one of his grandsons was consecrated a bishop by Pope Leo X in 1516. When the Protestant Reformation erupted in the sixteenth century, black African priests were pastoring churches on the islands off the west coast of Africa. Thus the first Christianity to be adopted by the ancestors of African-Americans was not Protestantism but Catholicism.

When we adjust our perspective on the formation of the Atlantic World to include the South Atlantic, not just the North, we begin to realize that the Atlantic World—from its inception—involved black Catholics. Africans accompanied the first Spanish expeditions to invade the Americas and soon formed the bulk of the labor force used to exploit the lands seized by Spanish, Portuguese, and French Catholics in the Caribbean and Brazil. Africans outnumbered Europeans in the population of colonies like Cuba and Haiti. The statistical minority of black Catholics in North America seems less salient when we take account of the large populations of black Catholics in South America and the Caribbean. Moreover, black Catholics in the U.S. are historically linked to these early African-American Catholics through Louisiana and Baltimore, where Haitian émigrés influenced the development of enduring black Catholic communities in the early nineteenth century. To cite one example: the first community of African-American religious, the Oblate Sisters of Providence, founded in Baltimore in 1829, was constituted by four young women of Haitian and Cuban origin.

The first lesson to be drawn from my rapid survey is this: the recovery of their origins, and their subsequent history as well, is of crucial importance to black Catholic identity, to their sense of being truly black and authentically Catholic. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the church, especially a church that prizes



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tradition as highly as does Roman Catholicism, to recover and preserve the history of her black members. Tragically, that history was inextricably bound up with the brutality of oppression, enslavement, and discrimination—a system of evil to which the church accommodated. Throughout the hemisphere, religious orders held slaves, including the Jesuits of colonial Maryland, who formed the first body of clergy for the church in the United States.

Christianity was deformed by its acceptance of slavery. In allying itself with the brutal exploitation of Africans and the racism that legitimated it, the church found herself in the position of proclaiming the Gospel as a device of slave control. "Slaves be obedient to your masters, as you would to God," was a text frequently proclaimed by Catholic and Protestant clergy alike. As late as 1861, the widely used moral theology textbook written by Francis Patrick Kenrick, bishop of Philadelphia and later archbishop of Baltimore, proclaimed:

> But what is to be thought of the domestic servitude which exists in most of the southern and western states where the posterity of those who were brought from Africa still remain in slavery? It is indeed to be regretted that in the present fullness of liberty in which all glory there should be so many slaves, and that to guard against their movement it has been necessary to pass laws prohibiting their education and in some places greatly restricting their exercise of religion. Nevertheless, since such is the state of things, nothing should be attempted against the laws nor anything be done or said that would make them bear their yoke unwillingly.

My point is not simply to condemn this particular example of the church's alliance with oppressive systems of power, but to point out that toleration of such evil ineluctably carries long-lasting historic residues. Just as the historic effects of the Reformation still confront us, so too the results of slavery continue to affect our institutions and relationships today. As the church has acknowledged her responsibility for the religious brokenness of the Christian community, she must also admit and repent her responsibility for the racial brokenness that still cripples our society.

The second lesson, I would draw then from the history of African-Americans, is that the church needs to be especially sensitive to ongoing issues of domination and discrimination, particularly in their more subtle institutional forms. It is easy to discern and condemn outright acts and blatant expressions of prejudice, much more difficult to discern sins of omission and benign neglect. If I may offer an autobiographical example: last year, every church in my town commemorated the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., except my own parish church where no mention of Dr. King was made, not in the homily or even in the prayers of the faithful. Disappointed and angered, my family and I went to the local black Presbyterian church, in order to recall and rededicate ourselves to King's nonviolent struggle for racial justice. Not much of an inconvenience, but I could not help reflecting that such instances of negligence make black Catholics feel alien in their own church and encourage white Catholics to remain apathetic about one of the most important moral issues of our time.

Black Catholic feelings of alienation from the church have been exacerbated by the lack of black priests. The failure of Catholicism in the U.S. to develop a black clergy constituted the greatest single obstacle to the identification of African-Americans with Roman Catholicism. Well into the twentieth century many religious orders and diocesan seminaries routinely rejected black candidates. While a black Protestant clergy began to emerge in significant numbers by the end of the eighteenth century, it was not until the end of the nineteenth that the first black priest was ordained in the U.S.—Charles Randolph Uncles in Baltimore in 1891. To be sure, he had been preceded by the Healy brothers, James, Alexander, and Patrick, all ordained in Europe, at mid-century and by Augustus Tolton, ordained in Rome in 1886. Tolton was the first to be assigned to minister to black Catholics, and was publicly acclaimed by African-Americans, Protestant as well as Catholic, as "our priest." Tolton's fame in the black community symbolized the pride that African-Americans took in seeing one of their own elevated to the dignity of the priesthood; it also symbolized the novelty of such a step. In the absence of black clergy, a strong tradition of lay leadership emerged among black Catholics in the late nineteenth century. Five African-American Catholic Congresses met between 1889 and 1894, representing black Catholics from around the country. At these Congresses, lay delegates publicly articulated the meaning of their Catholic faith. To black Protestants they asserted their belief that the Roman Catholic church alone preserved the universalism of the Gospel. To white Catholics they enumerated incidents of discrimination within the church and proclaimed that Catholicism and race prejudice were incompatible. It was in conscious continuity with these nineteenth-century Congresses that black Catholics organized a sixth African-American Catholic Congress, held in Washington, D.C., in 1987, from which the present pastoral plan derived.

Black lay activism continued in the twentieth century with the organization in 1918 of the Federated Colored Catholics by Thomas Wyatt Turner, a professor of biology at Howard University and Hampton Institute. Turner, like his predecessors, condemned the presence of racism in the church, and stressed that discrimination, no matter the excuse, contradicted the Gospel. Attacking segregation in seminaries, he remarked to a white priest in 1919:

> The Catholic colored people have tied themselves, in the church, up to the Banner of the Lord Jesus Christ, which we think we recognize quite clearly; but when a

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white majority in the church shall for social purposes abandon this Banner, we shall certainly not be misled. If all the white priests and laymen decide that segregating and discriminating Catholics are reasonable in the Catholic church, we shall still cling to the undefiled Banner of the Lord, even though we may have to tread the "winepress alone."

Today, the church recognizes the need for recruitment of black priests and religious. Given the historic and current paucity of black clergy and black seminarians, however, the church also needs to recognize and encourage the exercise of leadership among the black laity. Without black men and women in positions of real authority within the church, blacks will continue, for the foreseeable future, to appear as wards of a white-run institution. Moreover, black lay leaders can be crucial role models for white as well as black Catholics. For both groups, black lay leadership signals the universal character of the church in our time and place, a universality which embraces all races and cultures in building up the body of Christ.

Historically, black lay leaders instinctively recognized the importance of organization on both the local and the national level—locally for effective action and nationally for solidarity and empowerment. At their five (now six) national African-American Congresses, black Catholic delegates took up the issue of evangelization and significantly linked it to social action. For them the two seemed as inseparable as word and deed. Unless the church did what she preached, hypocrisy and resultant cynicism were ever present dangers to belief. That is why attempts to temporize on issues of segregation and discrimination seemed so dangerous. Therefore, delegates to the Black Catholic Congresses in the nineteenth as well as the twentieth centuries expressed concern about substandard housing for black Americans, unemployment in their communities, the denial of Catholic education to black youth; at the same time they spoke of the need to evangelize the black community.

The final lesson that I wish to draw from the black Catholic experience is a challenge to recapture this vision of social action as evangelization. Nowhere is the challenge more obvious and more difficult than in the situation of inner-city Catholic schools. The Catholic school has been one of the primary points of contact between the Catholic church and black communities in twentieth-century America.

As a predominantly southern and rural black populace began to move increasingly to the cities of the North and the West after World War I, black Protestants came into contact—many of them for the first time—with Roman Catholics. Initially, the contact was none too friendly, as ethnic fears and economic rivalry aroused racial animosity between black migrants and Catholics of Irish, German, Italian, and Polish immigrant backgrounds. As they arrived, African-Americans replaced European immigrants in the urban ghettos and settled into blocks adjacent to them. For the first time black Protestants met black Catholics who had migrated from Louisiana and the Gulf Coast, traditional centers of black Catholic population. In the cities of Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, New York, and Washington, major magnets for black migration, it was usually the case that one or two Catholic churches remained in the changing neighborhoods to accommodate old parishioners and to convert newcomers.

As time went on, the parochial school, which offered urban blacks an appealing alternative to public education, became an important source of black converts. Exposed to the pervasive and often mandatory religion classes of the schools and to the personal concern evidenced by the nuns and priests, black Protestant children, and in some cases their parents, joined the church. As some social scientists have suggested, the desire for education and upward social mobility may have led some blacks to send their children to Catholic schools and to consider converting to Catholicism. However this may be, the number of black Catholics increased dramatically due to conversion. Between 1940 and 1975, the black Catholic population grew from 296,988 to 916,854, an increase of 208 percent. From 2.3 percent black Catholics grew to 4 percent of the black population. (Current estimates place the figure at approximately 2 million.) Irrespective of conversion figures, however, Catholic schools, because of their emphasis on discipline, religion, and achievement, constituted one of the few sources of hope in black communities devastated by poverty and neglect. And they have been valued as such by members of those communities, who, though Protestant, struggled to send their children to parochial schools in order to get them a good education and a chance for a better life.

Threatened by severe financial pressure, the future of many of these schools across the nation is now at risk. Will pastors and bishops continue to spend enormous resources upon the education of children who are predominantly non-Catholic? Will they choose, no doubt regretfully, to allow these schools to close? Their decisions will speak volumes to black Americans.

Precisely at a time when the epidemic of drug abuse, crime, and entrenched poverty spiral the black underclass to new depths of demoralization and despair, the church needs to preach by action, as well as by word. Twenty years after the Kerner Commission Report, the gap between "two separate and unequal nations" has become for some an abyss. Black Americans wonder why this situation does not stir more moral outrage among Catholics who claim to be concerned about the sanctity of human life. The church needs to arouse the consciences of Catholics about the crises of the inner cities and to devote institutional efforts on the local and national levels to deal with this legacy of racism.

The history of Roman Catholicism among African-Americans stretches back to the beginnings of the Atlantic world in which America itself was formed. Black Americans are not strangers to Catholicism; all along they have claimed it as their own. In the midst of slavery, segregation, and discrimination, they persisted in their belief and in so doing bore eloquent witness to the essence of the Gospel. If taken seriously, the history of their faith impels us to attend with renewed urgency and specificity to the profound challenge that Jesus placed before all his followers: "As long as you did it to the least of these, you did it unto me." □

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GETTING OUR HEADS TOGETHER

AN AGENDA FOR CATHOLIC INTELLECTUALS

SIDNEY CALLAHAN

Today there exists very little activity that can be described with the exclusive term "American Catholic intellectual life." Educated Catholics have been assimilated into the larger culture and now find themselves subject to the same general social conditions that militate against all varieties of intellectual life in this country. Within the Catholic community there are other forces that further impede intellectual dialogue. Our present situation, in my view, represents a decline from the level of recent previous decades. But mere nostalgia will not restore the intellectual and spiritual liveliness of a simpler time, with its clear-cut verities. If Catholics are to fashion new creative strategies, we must first come to terms with current social realities.

When I use the term intellectual life, I mean something broader than narrowly focused academic scholarship, or highly specialized scientific work, or the current state of education in colleges and universities. Intellectual life arises from the broad-ranging activity of reading, discussing, and responding to ideas and arguments devoted to the meaning of events, the interpretation of human experience. Intellectuals, as opposed to pure scholars, pure scientists, practicing professionals, or social activists, are engaged in reflective cognitive wrestling with contrasting ideas, current controversies, and opposing worldviews.

Intellectuals may also be scholars, professionals, artists, or activists, but when operating as intellectuals they are constructing and reconstructing their culture's paradigms or cultural maps. Within a society, the intellectuals are those thinkers making the maps and discussing the proper rules for making maps, rather than the people doing the detailed specialized drawings emerging in the research of lab, library, or the field. Intellectuals are neither purely scholars nor purely hands-on activists. Rather than engage in hand-to-hand combat at the barricades, or in the courtroom, or in the missions, intellectuals shape the course of activism and give general directions to the professions; they are one step removed from the battle, reflecting on the whys and wherefores of the war.

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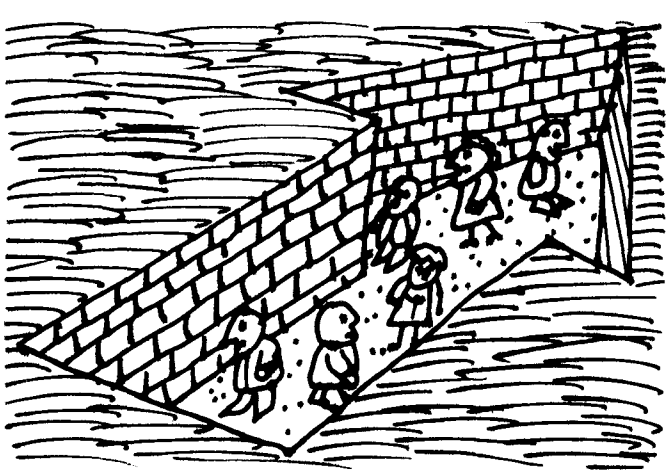
As the intelligence service of the society, intellectuals have to be generalists geared to taking a larger perspective, constantly scanning the theoretical weather, the changing terrain, and the movements of different bodies of troops. In other words intellectuals have to be able to raise their heads from their own narrowly focused projects (and from their own careers), and think critically about what they see. The writers among them then persuasively communicate ideas to others in nontechnical language that everyone can understand, i.e., English. English is the "*lingua franca*" of the interdisciplinary intellectual life, bridging the jargon of the two-and-twenty cultures of the day.

Bridging the gaps between cultures, bringing news of the currents in a society to its members are important activities. While intellectuals have come in for a lot of scorn and contempt over the course of history, especially in America, they are nowhere more hated and persecuted than in totalitarian regimes. Intellectuals and the intellectual life seek just that general level of applied truth and relevant meaning that can question the status quo and all its operations. Detailed analyses are by nature too specific to cause trouble. No matter how many papers Freud published in the scholarly medical journals, he could never have changed the map of the modern world but for his masterly prose and large syntheses of ideas.

On a more modest modern level—after all, not all intellectuals are geniuses—a work such as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*



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launched the ecological movement. In science, social science, and the humanities there are other intellectuals such as John Kenneth Galbraith whose work in economics and public policy addresses problems in an integrated way and thereby changes the ongoing dialogue in many different fields. In recent American Catholic life, John Courtney Murray (on religious liberty), Dorothy Day (on peace), Michael Harrington (on poverty), Daniel Patrick Moynihan (on the family) have significantly shifted the religious or national debate. Still, to function effectively as an intellectual today is not easy. There are certain structural difficulties built into the lifestyles of America's intelligent educated professionals which can illuminate our special problems within the Catholic community. An intellectual life is built upon certain foundations, and it can flourish best under certain conditions that are increasingly unavailable in American society. (Perhaps there are enclaves that have escaped recent social changes but I have not heard of them.) I would see these problematic conditions in the ways leisure, work, professions, family life, and political and social communities are now structured.

In the current organization of work and professional life, narrow specialization and enormous expenditures of time are required and rewarded. Competitive professional fields are crowded with the results of the postwar baby boom's demographic bulge. Along with the competitive crowding there has been an information explosion. Everywhere we see a marked increase in the complexity and specialization of jobs so that the ordinary workload, in both the hours required and the imposed pace of work, is heavier than before. (The fax machine has finally finished off work-free vacations unless you can get out of reach of a telephone.) In academia and other professions, we see for the first time in history an affluent educated elite who follow slave-labor schedules and endure increasing stress from competition and overwork. These conditions are legitimated by a cult of productivity and ambition, and are imposed upon all aspiring candidates, who, in a tight labor market have been fairly desperate to succeed.

Typically, in academia, requirements for publication, teaching, research, and service are simultaneously increased and enforced by financially pressured institutions. Only highly specialized research published in scholarly refereed journals will count toward more and more exacting standards for promotion and tenure decisions. (We see the ridiculous plight of a Pulitzer-Prize-winning author like Paul Starr turned down for tenure at Harvard.) The resulting pressure for turning out scholarly publications means that most intellectual energy is directed toward highly focused projects, which only a small group of other scholars can read with profit.

With the increase of educated persons in larger and larger corporations, professions, and educational institutions, we find a proliferation of worlds within worlds. There is more and more specialization as size, dispersal, and relocations of educated populations transform social groupings. There are more and more publications, but they are increasingly targeted for professional, scholarly, or recreational reading. Fewer general journals and magazines exist in which serious intellectual ideas can be publicly discussed. Politics as the common serious concern of all public citizens has become discredited by rampant corruption, political scandals, and recent campaigns designed for the media. The growth of television has made serious inroads on the written forms of communication. A great deal of general intellectual writing used to convey general ideas of importance to a similarly educated population, who shared common cultural concerns despite their different occupations, and who had enough leisure to converse.

Leisure has disappeared from American society. Since leisure is the basis of culture and one of the cornerstones of the intellectual life, we suffer cultural deprivation in the midst of material plenty. Even if there were more common forums and publications, would the harassed, overworked masses of educated Americans have time to read and reflect on them? It takes psychological energy to think and focus attention; it is tempting to skip those expenditures of energy that are not immediately necessary for survival—those things that are not "in my field." Only fairly leisured persons can partake of the high form of cultural play that makes up the intellectual life. Our educated classes are working extremely hard at work—and working equally hard at home.

Family life has changed. Servants have disappeared, the extended family is no longer a practical support, and women have gone to work and may pursue their own demanding careers. The leisure that Oxford dons once enjoyed was built upon the backs of various submerged and exploited populations—the servant classes, the toiling natives of the Empire, and women. Women, even educated, privileged women, have always done the "shadow work" of family, household, and culture, the maintenance work that made intellectual leisure possible for an elite group of males.

Today one side effect of long overdue social reforms is that there are fewer exploited groups that the educated classes can oppress in order to obtain time for their own leisure pursuits. (Even the exploited adjunct faculty do not give a full-time department member more time.) Neither at home nor at work do most professional men and women have wives, mothers, maiden aunts, housekeepers, nannies, secretaries, or research assistants to help them cope with pressing workloads. Having many high tech machines on hand is no substitute for devoted slave labor. Today, even priests and clerics no longer inherit the traditional bevy of free female labor to help them on their way. Jesuits take their turn at cooking and doing the dishes. A professional person in America procures a core of helpers and assistants only after he or she has climbed high enough in the professional hierarchy to join the overscheduled and overcommitted leaders of the establishment—who spend their days jetting here and there, crisscrossing the country to attend endless rounds of conferences and meetings.

In educated families there are new pressures from two careers, plus increasingly high standards of childbearing and childrearing. The demands of justly-shared-out family maintenance tasks, or the demands of single parenting, further reduce the time and

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energy available for leisure, general intellectual reading, intellectual friendship, and ongoing dialogue. Even getting a nuclear family to eat dinner together regularly can be a major project; friends have to collate their calendars to plan for a cup of coffee. When a married couple manage to have common friends, in addition to work and family, their friends may not share their intellectual and professional commitments.

Single persons and vowed religious have their own difficulties in establishing communities of support, much less finding intellectual communities. As a priest friend of mine said of his new life at Notre Dame, "It's hard to get a sustained intellectual conversation going; the Holy Cross spirituality is Benedictine, you know, and after dinner they are always rushing off to communal prayer." Indeed, everyone in America is always rushing off somewhere—often to meditation, yoga, or stress reduction classes. For a common intellectual life there must be more time for ongoing, face-to-face informal dialogues that can stimulate sustained thinking.

For a full-bodied intellectual life to flourish there should also be a community small enough and conceptually cohesive enough for those who pursue inquiry and reflection to share core commitments and knowledge. A group of persons must generally know the same things, read the same things, and be committed to the same values and goals. Few people, even in academia, have access to other people who share their specific interests or their values. In my department for instance, there are twenty-two psychologists, all hired for their different specialties, all reading different journals—when they have any time left over from teaching four courses while commuting among five campuses. We can barely talk psychology together, much less explore the relevance of religious values to our discipline. I do sometimes talk with colleagues in the philosophy and English departments, but my friends there are equally peripatetic, and often share the humanities' traditional distrust of psychology, or what they conceive psychology to be—no small problem for the field itself.

At last count there were forty-some special divisions in the American Psychological Association, which in addition just suffered a major schism between those emphasizing psychology as an experimental science and those who are willing to include the interests of professional clinicians in the organization. The dissenting scientists went off to start a new organization. This rift forces us to recognize that psychology is many different subdisciplines using the same label. Our confusion is typical of the rapid growth of academic specializations across all fields and professions.

From what I have seen of theology, philosophy, political science, sociology, and English literature, similar schisms and separate schools exist. Often a person may have to wait for an annual professional meeting to find a few people who share enough of the same scholarly interests to have a lengthy conversation

Christie C. Neuger, assistant professor of pastoral theology:

"When people are in crisis, they very often turn to their ministers for help in finding spiritual, emotional, and practical resources. Good pastoral care does not come naturally or accidentally. Often its theory and application run counter to our assumptions and intuition. I am committed to empowering our students to be able to engage in the ministry and in the art of pastoral counseling."

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or good argument. And the more interdisciplinary one's interests, the more difficult it is to find those other persons.

Without a common foundation, or common goals, or a common life with some leisure, an intellectual life withers. Academia, religious or secular, is filled with disillusioned people who entered the scholarly professions seeking the ideal of an intellectual community, but now find themselves no better off than their classmates who went into insurance. Committed Catholics who seek to integrate their religious belief with their professional work have their own peculiar troubles. Perhaps modern Marxists are undergoing some of the same difficulties.

Catholics and Marxists once shared, respectively, one of the most favorable conditions for a lively intellectual life; it is enormously stimulating to share ideological commitments and to have a belief system that advocates the integration of thought, practice, and personal life. The effort to integrate one's words, deeds, work, and attachments, to serve a transcendent cause, energizes and enlivens professional work. It counters selfish careerism and pushes the mind to grapple with large perspectives and distant horizons. In fact I would say that one of the ways that the ideal of a Catholic intellectual life has been differentiated from secular scholarship or science has been its commitment to a holistic vision or sense of religious vocation. Christians have taken very seriously the command to love God with all their hearts and minds; they have long recognized that one of the talents needed for building the kingdom can be a vocation given over to seeking to serve God as truth. "Whether you eat or drink, whatsoever you do, do all for the glory of God"—and to study and think well has definitely been praiseworthy, as those esteemed as doctors of the church attest.

Among lay Catholics who became educated in large numbers after World War II, the sense of vocation or calling once limited to the religious orders was taken up with enthusiasm. Many men did not feel called to be priests but were eager to be professors. A great deal of idealism was felt by those laypersons called to intellectual work: One studies and seeks truth for the greater glory of God; one writes and teaches and professes to further the kingdom, out there in the university and the real world, rather than in the monastery.

In that first flowering in the forties and fifties it would be appropriate to speak of the American Catholic intellectual community as fairly cohesive and homogeneous. It was a very small group, its liberal wing sometimes labeled "Commonweal Catholics." In those days the relatively small number of educated Catholics who were engaged in an intellectual life would all know one another, read one another's books and articles, and share a common faith and education. Insight into the spirit of this earlier era can be had by reading Wilfrid Sheed's account of his parents, *Frank and Maisie*.

Frank Sheed and Maisie Ward were a force unto themselves, who through publishing and frenetic lecturing single-handedly engendered much of pre-Vatican II intellectual life in Catholic America. They also lived their faith in an exemplary style, as did other influential Catholic writers such as Dorothy Day. Other memoirs of those years among Catholic intellectuals can be found in the writings of Raissa Maritain, Abigail McCarthy, Christopher Dawson, and Richard Gilman. Prominent intellectual converts were received into the church, and when they became Catholics they joined a well-defined faith, clearly demarcated, with its own distinct intellectual community. There were various circles and centers, and various publication ventures in the East and Midwest, Fordham, Georgetown, Chicago, St. John's, Notre Dame, Boston. Educated Catholics gathered in enclaves to study and discuss their faith; they were trying to integrate their faith with the intellectual currents of the day. Much energy was also spent on matters of internal church reform and liturgical renewal—an endeavor which was confirmed by the calling of Vatican II and its surprisingly dramatic unfolding.

Such gatherings of Catholic intellectuals for study and mutual support were necessary because in general the intellectual and professional worlds of the time were fairly hostile to Catholics. Persecution, as it always does, engendered high morale, cohesion, and loyalty among those who did not fall away under the pressure. The forties and fifties were times in academia when doctrinaire secular atheism inherited from the Enlightenment reigned supreme. All religion was a remnant of superstition and Catholicism was the very worst of all. As one secular savant accurately noted, "anti-Catholicism was the anti-Semitism of the intellectuals."

The crudest misunderstandings and antipathies could be encountered in Ivy League establishment circles, whose members were rigid in their own certainties that either Freud, or David Hume, or science had settled the God question forever. The ecumenical movement was also in its infancy, so Catholics were subjected to suspicion, bias, and subtle pressures from their Protestant neighbors, as well as from the secular world. The prejudice and scorn that Catholics could meet, say in the Harvard philosophy department, would seem quaint today.

During this period many educated, married Catholics were also unassimilated to the mainstream in their sexual manners and mores. They were not only attempting to live new forms of the ancient intellectual vocations (Dominican, Jesuit), but also to practice distinctive spiritual ideals in their family lives. Here again there was an attempt to integrate the influence of the Catholic Worker movement's stress on providence and poverty (Franciscan) with the liturgical movement's revival (Benedictine). Many intellectual Catholics were attempting to live by a radically different sexual ethic, sans artificial birth control, aspiring to ideals of love and sacrifice through having large families. Women were exhorted to live out a particular ideal of the valiant woman, which could not easily encompass career aspirations. The ban on artificial contraception produced intense pressures among educated Catholics, caught in contradictory aspirations—the solitude of the study versus the active labor of domesticity.

Looking back on that period in American Catholic intellectual life, I can see that the atmosphere of the community was charged with a great deal of sublimated erotic energy. Allan Bloom mentions that the sexual restraints of an earlier generation of students lent a romantic or erotic edge to higher education that heightened the life of learning. I found this point intriguing, because I think

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there was an erotic intensity informing the atmosphere of postwar educated Catholic life. A heightened existential erotic style of faith was idealized: it could be found in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*, Graham Greene novels, and still can be seen today in Walker Percy's writings or John Paul II's discourses on love and sex. Catholics were clearly different from others in their faith, in their thinking, and in their chastity, sexual practices, and commitments.

When all went well with these first- or second-generation of educated lay Catholic intellectuals, things went very well indeed. The commitment and integration of living a vocation to the intellectual life that combined abstract thought with intense liturgical practice, with erotic energy and intense family commitments—in the midst of social persecutions—produced an *esprit de corps* and an exciting sense of bonded community. Dorothy Day's work, along with that of the worker priests and Young Christian Workers, had been influential in persuading Catholic intellectuals that they must be committed to social justice and live a simple life devoted to sacrifice and love. Intellectual Catholics knew who they were, and what they were about. Their vocation was to fight the good fight, seek truth, and persevere in social reform efforts inside and outside the Catholic church. They could talk and argue with one another, but stayed united in order to gain support for the struggle with a sometimes hostile world. Literature, philosophy, and above all politics were considered fertile fields for combining religious commitment and intellectual work. Passion and ideology were united.

So what happened? Many things, almost all of them fortunate. First and foremost, after the Kennedys and Vatican II there came a new assimilation and integration into a mainstream culture that was growing bigger and more complex. An increase in population and affluence, along with a series of victories of various sorts, weakened the cohesion of a small semipersecuted community. After the council the goal of working for a reforming council was over. The opening of the windows to long-repressed reform brought a surge of new energies, new experiments, and the rapid growth of pluralism within the church.

But some segments and communities moved ahead while some did not and much conflict resulted. In the turbulent sixties and seventies the numbers of educated and professionally successful Catholics grew and grew. But, as we now know, educated practicing Catholics can be going to work in the libraries, laboratories, and academic leadership positions, just as they go to work in the hospitals, law firms, and boardrooms of corporate America, without contributing an iota to Catholic intellectual life. Successful assimilation into mainstream professional and academic America produces a mixed blessing. Often good, highly intelligent people have little Catholic education or formation, so that there is a huge discrepancy between their secular achievements and education, and their religious knowledge. Counting Catholic CEOs, *Who's Who*ers, even Catholic deans or presidents of secular colleges is not the same thing as assessing the state of Catholic intellectual life.

Another result of the internal reforms after Vatican II is internal pluralism and growth of the church beyond the orbit circumscribed by the traditional Roman European tradition. The Catholic church is now a huge and increasingly diverse institution of many mansions, with new rooms opening up every day. The cultural range of believers and the spectrum of philosophical approaches among intelligent, educated, intellectual Catholics are large and increasing. This means, in practice, that even if one can find a group of fellow intellectuals who are practicing Catholics, there can be wide differences among various religious styles represented. Some Catholic intellectuals come in the neoconservative mode, others tend to be liberal centrists, others are avant-garde devotees of feminism, liberation theology, or Eastern religious movements. When you meet a fellow Catholic today, a certain dance of inquiry ensues, since knowing of the other's active religious practice does not allow taking anything else for granted.

We now have a great deal of fragmentation; or, to put it more positively, a thousand flowers are blooming in the garden. Being a sacramental, worshiping church with both a hierarchical structure and a long tradition of dissent within unity, we have held together. But there are growing tensions and hostilities toward Roman abuses of authority. Conflicts emerge over what we should do with cultural assimilation and pluralism within: Celebrate and go forward, or fight for more integralism and cohesion in the traditional mode? Obviously Roman leadership in the church is bent on restoring the older unities and dominant centralization through the papacy. I do not think this is either practical or Catholic, or that it represents a sound intellectual reading of the signs of the times. A better way may be found.

Our problem is how to cope with the complexity and departmentalization of our life and times in order to achieve a viable American Catholic intellectual life—or lives. I can use my own case as symptomatic of the general problem—and I am unusually fortunate. My large family and circle of friends, almost all non-Catholic, are loving and supportive but not really much interested in my intellectual or professional or religious interests. They love me despite the fact that I am an intellectual, have a professional career, and am a devoted Catholic; we talk together almost exclusively about our personal and private concerns. My female friends and I often extend our reflections on our personal lives through the novels and fiction that we read together, but none of them would ever want to read the psychological or philosophical texts that I eagerly devour.

But every morning I should rise up and thank God that I was born a woman and so have friends. So many males I see seem completely bereft of personal friendships. Intellectual men, in and out of the religious life, may have more difficulties if they do not relate to the male-bonding rites surrounding sports. Discussing sporting events seems to serve as a substitute for intimate masculine conversation. Professional males do seem to talk to their colleagues about their work, but these conversations often are quite guarded and turn out to be more professional gossip than substantively intellectual. Since so many professional relationships are competitive, instead of collaborative and nurturing, males, along with females now rising in the ranks, seem to suffer social and intellectual deprivation, despite their social

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Anne Porter

In Storm-Watch Season

For Anne Robertson

The foaming clematis
Has finished blooming
The autumn
Equinox is here
The air is very still
But day and night
Storms in the Caribbean
Keep the Atlantic roaring

The ocean
Is pouring fog
Into the trees
And with it the fresh smells
Of eelgrass and of kelp
Float inland from the torn
And churning beaches

In the storm-haunted evening
A cricket
Has begun to sing
A street-lamp shines
Deep in the fog
A burr
Of golden light

In three months' time
We will have snow
In three months' time
The savior will be born.

advantages in the world of work.

In my own professional life and work I rarely find compatible persons with whom I can fully share intellectual pursuits, this because of my interdisciplinary interests. My fellow psychologists are not much interested in philosophy, ethics, or religion. Ethicists and philosophers I see, and live with, are decidedly not interested in psychology and religion. My fellow parishioners and few Catholic friends give me spiritual support and a sense of religious community but are not really interested in philosophy, ethics, or psychology. My American Catholic intellectual life is conducted mostly by mail and in the library.

What can be done? Perhaps a two-pronged effort could be envisioned. One is a decentered, self-reliant, do-it-yourself, till-your-own-garden strategy. At the same time a larger campaign might be mounted to move Catholic institutions toward different goals that would address the cultural problems of overload, overspecialization, underformation, and isolation of so many educated Catholics. A combination of a bottom-up, base-community approach and a top-down institutional tactic might make some headway.

I know less about the larger institutional approaches but I can at least imagine what might be done from what I have observed of creative efforts at some Catholic colleges and archdiocesan programs. Catholic colleges might start to fight back against the overspecialization of academia by starting interdisciplinary institutes and more public programs devoted to topics which meet the problems of Catholics in secular culture. Many programs I have attended—for instance on the family, on death and dying, on aging, on computer technologies, or the changing church—have brought in Catholic professionals from the local community to meet with the students, faculty, and guest speakers.

Such interdisciplinary intellectual endeavors have often been funded by grants from outside the institutions, such as the state councils on the humanities or corporations. These efforts have also often been the brainchild of some creative retired religious sister on the faculty who no longer has to fight for tenure with constant publishing to update her curriculum vitae. If Catholic educational institutions truly want to encourage the intellectual life as a search for integrated truth, they will have to provide institutional supports and rewards that can compete with the rewards offered by academic grants for narrow specialization and value-free inquiry.

If other institutions in the church wish to further the intellectual life, the world of Catholic adult education awaits. Individual parishes may not have the resources to go it alone, but dioceses, seminaries, centers for spirituality, retreat houses, and other institutes and organizations can provide programs to stimulate the intellectual life. These would have to be broader than courses in Scripture or theology, or studies of the mystics, spirituality, and prayer. The present great revival of spirituality, complete with institutes and publications devoted to spiritual practices, presents a model for an intellectual revival. Spiritual institutes and retreats teach centering prayer and integration of self. But

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today's Catholics also need centered, integrated thinking.

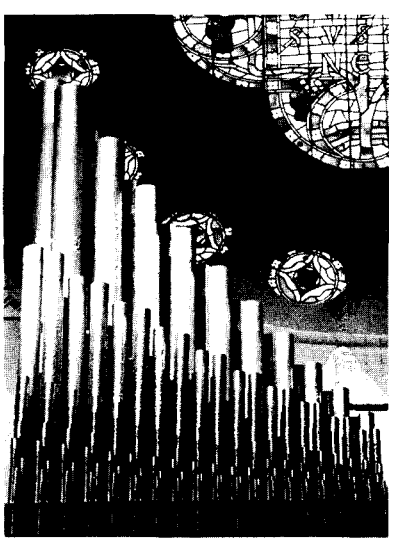
The crying need of educated Catholics is for sustained intellectual grappling with the challenge of integrating Christianity with their work and their worlds of secular thinking. Perhaps a national Catholic great books course or a university of the air as in Great Britain could spark such a movement. Perhaps the NCCB, or the Paulists, or the Jesuits, or even the Knights and Daughters might fund a prime-time Bill Moyers-type series of intellectual Catholic conversations on TV to begin the great revival. A project looking to intellectual renaissance could be sponsored in cooperation with Catholic educational institutions and Catholic magazines. Every intellectual Catholic magazine should be working to get its networks of readers together for more sustained inquiry—and thereby ensure a future readership.

At this point the top-down, institutional initiatives and strategies begin to shade into the bottom-up, base-community, small-group approaches. The potential of small groups is certainly not a novel idea. Great changes and social movements have always started with mutant small groups pursuing goals different from those of the mainstream culture. Communist cell groups, AA, the women's movement, group psychotherapy, and today's Christian base communities all understand the potency of sustained, focused, small-group interaction to support beliefs and goals. Christianity itself started with a small group, moved on to house churches, and may be headed home again.

When one is intellectually isolated and starving something has to be done immediately on a self-help model. Individuals can work to set up small groups with enough in common to recreate microcosms of past embodiments of coherent Catholic communities. To overcome the present diversity, information overload, and specialization, it will take small groups meeting regularly to go deeply enough into a subject that addresses the fundamental challenges of interdisciplinary intellectual questions. These groups will have to be smaller and more tightly organized than the large formal associations that have heretofore formed—the Catholic guild of physicians or lawyers, or whatever. There must be more cohesion and regular continuity; to get it, small groups will have to be based near home. Meeting only once or twice a year at larger national professional meetings is not enough.

I have had some positive experience of such supportive intellectual inquiry groups, although never in my own discipline of psychology. One small group that met in our living room to study Protestant theology at Harvard three decades ago consisted, among others, of Daniel Callahan, Sidney Callahan, John Noonan, Mike Novak, John Ratté, and Harvey Cox (our ecumenical gesture to Protestantism). All the members of the group started out educating themselves and ended up publishing—often in these very pages.

Another productive, small interdisciplinary group I was in met together in the midseventies, studied the family for a year, reading and discussing the literature. We were particularly inter-



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ested in the religious and value questions that were regularly left out of the professional literature. A number of books and articles came from the endeavor; we all came away enriched in other ways, as well as determined to muster public support for the much-neglected American family.

I am now in a small group of women in theology who read and discuss intellectual issues from a feminist perspective. We support one another's development and aspirations, and discuss our intellectual work-in-progress in a way that affirms the feminist belief that the personal is political. We feel both stimulated and deeply grounded in this like-thinking, nurturing, and non-competitive group. But, as is usual with small group efforts, ripple effects occur. Three of us were asked to help plan and participate in an archdiocesan spiritual center's day for women. We expected 40 to 50 women; some 230 women and a few men attended. Such experiences make one realize the untapped potential for adult education in the American church. The faithful, at least the feminine faithful, thirst to grow intellectually and spiritually.

In my most optimistic utopian flights of hope I can imagine Newman's second spring of the church come to flower in America. In this scenario we successfully slog through the mire and mudslides caused by the chilling winter fogs blown in over the seas from Rome. In an American Catholic spring a thousand flowers of free intellectual inquiry bloom and we fearlessly remind ourselves that the desire to know and understand is the work of the spirit of truth. All around us the challenges and intellectual problems of our modern era await disciplined, creative thinking, infused and inspired by Christian values. Naturally I am most intrigued by epistemological questions in psychology and ethics of how reason is informed by faith. But in other fields and non-fields there is no dearth of questions—issues, dilemmas, discoveries—now understood mostly or solely in a secular context, that await exploration and clarification from a faith perspective. The last word has not been spoken about the origins of life, the nature of nature, the mysteries of evil and of goodness. Analysis we have in abundance, synthesis is in short supply.

Ideally American Catholic intellectual life can be renewed through the impetus of small groups addressing focused intellectual concerns as they interact with a variety of institutional initiatives. For better or worse, Catholics have now entered the American mainstream and must cope with assimilation, establishments, and internal and external pluralism. After all, we can never go back to being a persecuted minority pressured into ideological cohesion, so it can only be onward, upward, and outward bound for us as a community. Happily, at this particularly turbulent and hopeful time of realignments and reconsiderations in the postmodern world, in history, America may be ready to listen to new voices singing old songs with new verses.

Many have noted that the secular liberal establishment is crumbling in its old certainties. What has been called liberalism's "thin theory of the good" is breaking down. Catholicism, with its avowal of a more communitarian social justice ethic and its full-bodied view of human nature, has something tonic to offer tired blood and anemic individualism. This may truly be "the Catholic moment" in America. Or perhaps we should say the time is ripe for many different Catholic moments, since the intellectuals in the church, being argumentative, are not speaking with one party line. But the larger culture may be ready to listen to diverse streams of the Catholic tradition in new ways. Our intellectual task is to work harder at understanding how the good news we offer relates to other quests for knowledge. All we want in the end, of course, is to enlist the hearts and minds of all humanity in a mutual seeking of love, peace, justice, and truth. Americans are born utopians: The impossible only takes a little longer. □

STAGE

SHOOTING STARS

'ORPHEUS' & 'BESIDE HERSELF'

When celebrated performers come back to the New York stage, audience expectations lie in wait for them. This is true even when they are doing something more complicated, less self-aggrandizing than the usual star turns, which is certainly the case with Vanessa Redgrave in *Orpheus Descending* and William Hurt in *Beside Herself*. Still, audiences go to be astounded and, since astonishment is rare in the theater, often come away disappointed. Opinion seems to be divided in both these instances. Some theatergoers have been dazzled by a vision (like Vee Talbott in *Orpheus*); others, like the man in the original shaggy-dog story, come away saying, "It wasn't so shaggy."

Redgrave's Lady Torrance vibrates at the center of Peter Hall's *Orpheus Descending*, a reading of Tennessee Williams's play that is probably more conventional than Hall thinks it is. He and Redgrave did the play in London at the end of 1988—the first production of the new commercial company he established when he stepped down as director of the National Theatre. Now he has brought the production, recast with American actors, to Broadway. In a number of interviews Hall has repeated what he said in a piece in the *Daily Telegraph* at the time of the London production (reprinted in the October *Playbill*)—that Williams is a non-naturalistic playwright, that his verse is a poet's variation of the spoken language, and that *Orpheus Descending* is an unusual Williams play in that it "portrays the bigotry and racism of a whole community." Like *Sweet Bird of Youth*? Given this understanding of Williams and his play, Hall uses lights and sounds as offstage threats (as Williams's stage directions suggest) and fills the background with shadowy figures who hover as intrusions in even the most intimate scenes.

Williams opens his play with "two female clowns," to borrow his description of similar figures in *The Rose Tattoo*, who turn exposition into a flamboyant set piece. Beulah gives the audi-

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ence the preplay history of Lady Torrance and her "Wop" father while Dolly chimes in with single lines ("Lawd have mercy!") that work not as interruptions but as support, like the cries of the congregation in an evangelical service, feeding the narrative build of Beulah's recollections of lust and violence. "This monologue should set the nonrealistic key for the whole production," Williams wrote, and Hall has followed his lead. Sloane Shelton, who seems to understand, to feel every hesitation, every repetition, every intensification in Williams's words, is a marvelous Beulah. Too marvelous for the production, perhaps, because nothing—not even the entrance of Redgrave as Lady—has the power of Shelton's monologue. For me, the rest was anticlimax. I was left to contemplate how Hall's conception worked, what Redgrave did to Lady, and how the American actors fared in her company.

The trick with successful Williams productions is to use the nonrealistic elements, the overstated characters, what he once called his "cornpone melodrama," but to make sure that there are real toads in those imaginary gardens (*pace*, Marianne Moore), characters in whom we get glimpses of ourselves. There are four Williams outsiders in *Orpheus Descending*: Vee, the visionary painter who copes with Two River County by seeing beyond it; Carol Cutrere, whose weapons are defiance and her own iron-like frailty; Val, the itinerant guitarist whose defense, until he meets Lady, is to keep moving; and Lady, who schemes to turn her trap into triumph. In this production, Tammy Grimes—an odd choice for Vee—manages to suggest, physically not verbally, Vee's willful blindness to the horrors around her. Anne Twomey, as Carol, is amorphous—the actress, not the character—never conveying the strength and the isolation that I still feel when I conjure the final image of Lois Smith's Carol in the original production. Kevin Anderson is not the conventional stud figure once regularly cast in Williams plays, but his Val is the most interesting of the four fugitive kind. Then, there is Redgrave's Lady. The performer seems to have taken her cue from Williams's description: "Her voice is often shrill and her body tense." She does not talk to people, but in their vicinity, and the disconnection—even in the scenes with Val—is heightened by puppet-like movements, an awkwardness that is intended as a shield. Her separateness is emphasized by her having chosen to play with an unnecessary Italian accent (Lady grew up in this Southern town) which sometimes sounds Irish and sometimes Zsa Zsa Gabor. Her Lady—like her Mrs. Alving in *Ghosts*, which I saw in London a few years ago—seems absorbed in her own anguish. These four characters, who circle one another, touching occasionally, never making real contact, need to provide the center of pain and the failed promise of hope so that the ending is properly frightening. This *Orpheus Descending* certainly recognizes what Williams wanted to say, but it is never demanding enough to compel me to listen.

The play that has brought William Hurt home to the Circle Repertory Company, where he performed regularly in the late 1970s and early 1980s, is a great deal simpler than *Orpheus Descending*. While the forces of darkness defeat the life-bearers in the Williams play, the heroine of *Beside Herself* (Lois Smith, thirty years after her Carol Cutrere), comes to terms with her past and decides to live as fully as possible. The signal, aside from her lines, is that she removes the "Do not resuscitate" bracelet at the end of the play—a gesture that was not widely perceived—having decided, like Don Marquis's Mehitabel, that there's a dance in the old dame yet. The playwright, Joe Pintauro, may never have come across Arthur Laurente's *A Clearing in the Woods* (1957 like the original *Orpheus*), in which the heroine appears simultaneously at four different ages, but Laurente's device is the one that Pintauro uses. Mary, apparently living alone in the woods on an island, is in fact living with herself at other ages (ten, twenty, thirty, or thereabouts), trying to find out where things have gone wrong in her life. The suggestion is that she has hurt herself by being too proud, and that realization sends her ghost-selves away and leaves her free to concentrate on the UPS man—a younger man—with whom she hopes to find a comforting twilight romance. It is a fairly trying play—obvious, predictable, pedestrian—which is interesting only because Lois Smith gives a touch of irony to her character and because William Hurt plays the UPS man. The handsome movie star (how the camera caressed him in *The Accidental Tourist*) has made himself a little ugly (a walrus moustache) and a lot ungainly as Augie-Jake. More than that, his gestures (using precision to suggest imprecision), his way of listening, his occasional teasing of lines give Augie-Jake a depth—or at least the tantalizing promise of depth—which the playwright failed to do.

Anyone tempted to go see how well *Orpheus Descending* withstands the artistry of Vanessa Redgrave and Peter Hall may also want to look in on *Beside Herself* to see how much William Hurt does with not very much. GERALD WEALES

SCREEN

BOYS WILL BE BOYS

'FATMAN' & 'BAKER BOYS'

Fatman and Little Boy was meant as a compelling update of the Faust story. Despite a strong conclusion, it is, on balance, a great disappointment. Directed by Roland Joffe (*The Killing Fields*), and starring Paul Newman, the film details the building of the first atomic bomb. It pulls no punches on the way that ego, careerism, and scientific hubris may have played as much a role in the project as national defense. It has a fine production design (just wait until one of its streamlined steel 1940s trains appears!) and a nostalgic look from all the smart brown and tan army uniforms on display. Set mostly in San Francisco or the Southwest (supposedly the Los Alamos, New Mexico, test site) the film aims at paradox: a bright-looking, morally purposeful *film noir*.

So what goes wrong? Something called drama, or more precisely dramatic pacing.

The beginning of the film moves fast, too fast. Originally

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intended to run three hours, the film had to be cut by a third. Joffe tries to make a virtue of this necessity, but his overspeedy exposition nearly matches the breakneck recklessness that he claims went into the bomb project and short-circuited asking and answering vital moral questions.

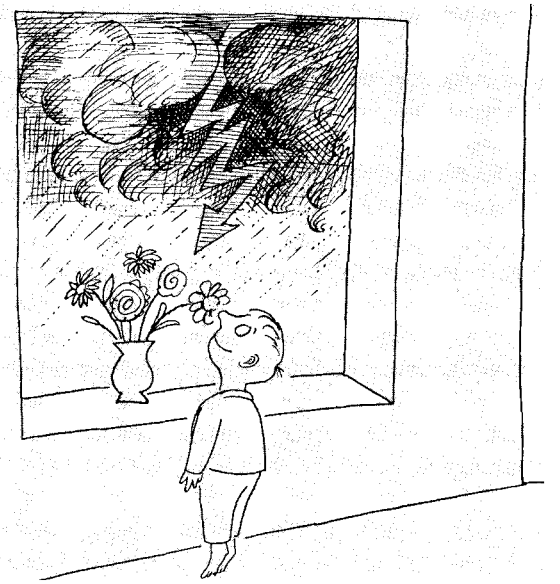
Still, the force of Paul Newman's curmudgeonly Great Satan holds you. Newman is no scientist, but he is the project director, General Leslie Groves, bent on building "the biggest stick in the playground," as he calls the bomb. He corrals Robert Oppenheimer (Dwight Schultz, of *The A-Team*) to build the bomb. He sees Oppenheimer's brilliance, makes him ringmaster at Los Alamos, feeds his vanity; then uses blackmail, appeals to glory, and other forms of persuasion to make him toe the line. Groves knows the weaknesses of the scientific mind: "just get them close," he says, "and they'll go the rest of the distance"; his whole strategy is to create a momentum even physicists can't resist. How can this go bad? Joffe parallels the Groves-Oppenheimer story with a subplot about a young physicist (John Cusack, brother of Joan) who falls in love with a very lovable local nurse (Laura Dern, daughter of Bruce). In itself, the love story is convincing; Cusack is compelling, and Dern has a face tailor-made for crying. It even fits in as a commentary on the twisted emotions between Groves and Oppenheimer. Still, the subplot is forced.

Phallic images of machismo, including shots of the bombs (nicknamed "Fatman" and "Little Boy") abound. At times, I thought I was reading Helen Caldicott's *Missile Envy*. More childish are exchanges with sexual innuendos between Newman and Schultz; Joffe and Robinson force in homosexuality as the cause of the power games that go on between men. The equation they suggest between unorthodox sexuality and mass murder is offensive. This strategy also means two fine actresses (the radiant Bonnie Bedelia as Oppenheimer's wife and Natasha Richardson as his mistress) are seen all too briefly.

The movie is sometimes valuable as history. It emphasizes the original reason for building the bomb: fear that the Nazis were building one. Indeed, its opening reminds us that it was Hitler who first declared war on us. Too bad a good history lesson and moral fable is so badly flubbed.

I missed another chance at stardom recently. At a Dunkin Donuts off 40th and Fifth: between coffee sips I suddenly realized that the almost painfully slim young woman dashing back and forth from seat to pay telephone was Michelle Pfeiffer. When she returned to her seat next to mine, I thought of buying her a dozen donuts. Instead, I quietly took out a handy copy of the industry rag, *American Film*, held it up for her to notice, and hoped for casual conversation, a handshake, an introduction to a director, my first screenplay....

The next time I saw Michelle Pfeiffer was in *The Fabulous Baker Boys*. She's the chanteuse who joins an on-the-skids piano duet (the Bakers are Jeff and Beau Bridges, real-life brothers). The trio rises to immediate success and fortune in the lounges, hotels, and inns around Seattle. The movie only works if Pfeiffer impresses us as much as she does audiences in the film, and she's a knockout, giving slinky sultriness new definition in her



evocative versions of old Rodgers and Hart songs (which she sings herself). One number—she sings in a red dress on top a piano at a New Year's party—is among the best scenes in film this year. Pfeiffer also has a fine acting range: in *Dangerous Liaisons*, she was compelling as a moral character; here she attempts to reach the lost, tightfisted soul of Jeff Bridges, who has squandered his talent and resents everyone else for it.

The Fabulous Baker Boys relies on Pfeiffer's star-power, exceptional direction and writing from Steve Kloves, poetic photography from Oscar-winner Michael Ballhaus, and crackerjack chemistry among the leads. Pfeiffer and Jeff Bridges play out their own pas de deux with just the right hesitations; they lean easily on the crisp but not heavy-handed dialogue, where a line like "we're taking a bath," resonates as a witty Freudian slip. Jeff and brother Beau also sparkle. Jeff plays a version of the alienated romantic hero; Beau is the ever reliable, less talented, but more organized business-minded partner and driving force in the group.

At first the role seems thankless, but Beau gets mileage from a nerdy lovableness; he is disturbed if they ever drop one of their standard songs from the repertoire, if they even vary a note. Casting the two brothers plays off their own real-life relationship: until some weak closing scenes, they deftly convey scores of nuances about affection, sibling rivalry, resentment, and ineradicable lifelong bonding. One scene on a hotel balcony has them dancing together before Beau passes Pfeiffer on to Jeff. Liberty and equality may have seen better days, but not fraternity.

The Fabulous Baker Boys is so fine-tuned it even gets away with a ten-ton animal symbol, an aging black Labrador who represents the soft side of Jeff's nature. One of the film's best scenes drapes the Labrador underneath a jet black piano as Jeff improvises at the keyboard and Pfeiffer leans above it. The photography in this movie is so good it makes something of the old metaphor "two ships passing in the night" in a twilight blue scene set in the Seattle harbor. Except for some messiness in tidying up the plot, the movie never misses a beat. TOM O'BRIEN

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The way we weren't

CATHOLIC COUNTERCULTURE IN AMERICA, 1933–1962
James Terrence Fisher
University of North Carolina Press, $32.50, 300 pp.

Robert G. Hoyt

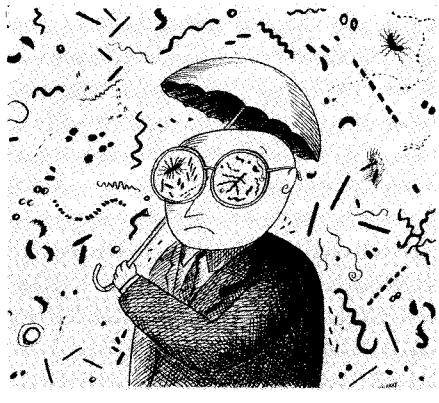
This is a work of cultural history, focused on the efforts of some Catholics in the three decades preceding Vatican II to create a Catholic counterculture, "a new society within the shell of the old," and/or to achieve an authentically Catholic selfhood. Both quests rose in reaction against the materialistic, sensate individualism of Protestant, capitalist America and against the defensiveness and parochialism of immigrant Catholicism. These efforts not only failed, the author holds, but had effects very different from those intended.

Two sentences from the introduction convey his thesis. "Though [Dorothy] Day was essentially a devoutly Catholic separatist, her movement [the Catholic Worker] launched a process which by the 1960s would find, much to her sorrow, millions of American Catholics exalting private conscience over the claims of the Church of Rome." The change came about because of an underlying attitude permeating the consciousness of the persons and movements the author studies: "Although the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) has often been cited as the cause of the immigrant church's transformation, or demise, the changes were actually rooted in three decades of an evolving sensibility I have called personalism." To put it more bluntly than the author might, Day and her allies and sympathizers wanted to rebuild the social order by bringing American Catholicism to life, but their efforts had little impact on society and more or less wrecked the church; or, perhaps more accurately, brought about a break-up of the existing Catholic culture.

Professor Fisher is a professional historian and he has obviously done thorough research on the period and on the individual figures he has chosen for study. He makes a number of shrewd observations about these people, and others that are either too subtle for me or go beyond my knowledge. I do have a quarrel, however, with the thesis he argues. As a nonscholar, my credentials for commenting are that I came of age in these decades, had some contact with four of Fisher's six principal figures, and was strongly influenced by them.

It's true enough that the Worker and similar movements that flourished during this period did not build Zion in America. Despite their efforts, few American Catholics today evidence much attachment to or understanding of the specifically Catholic ideals the movements sought to promote: detachment, community, social justice, a rejection of industrialist capitalism, and (in the case of the Worker) radical pacifism. The Goliath of today's mainstream culture is armored against slingshots. (But even here, as will appear later, a caveat is in order.)

It's also true that now, in contrast to previous eras, many practicing Catholics feel



free in conscience to ignore or reinterpret some of the church's moral teachings and sanctions, especially but not exclusively in matters sexual. But that isn't all bad, even from a perfectly orthodox perspective; further, it came about because of the confluence of a great many forces, among them the experience of pluralism and democracy, the growing numbers of Catholic college graduates and their relative religious sophistication, the carefully venturesome work of mainstream theologians and other thinkers. Giving the major blame or credit for this development to "personalism" or its advocates suggests that while the author knows a great deal about these people, he lacks a proper feel for the context in which they moved.

Essentially the book is an exercise in character study, or psychohistory. It gives three chapters to Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement. Another goes to Carol Jackson and Ed Willock, cofounders of *Integrity*, a monthly magazine that gained a cult following in the late 1940s and early 1950s. (Willock was also a chief figure in the establishment of Marycrest, a housing commune in Rockland County, New York.) Two chapters discuss the life and career of Tom Dooley, the charismatic young doctor who practiced heroism in Indochina (well before the war) and heroics on the lecture stage in America. A final chapter looks for parallels in the lives of Thomas Merton and Jack Kerouac.

Of the six, Day, Jackson, and Willock were movement-related: social critics, moralists, organizers, givers of inspiration. Dooley, Kerouac, and Merton are portrayed as searchers for identity, Catholic or otherwise. What they all had in common, in the author's view, is that they were romantic failures: idealists, utopians, and "antitriumphalists"—a term that seems to mean willful losers. He finds other com-

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mon characterological traits that help to explain both the genesis and the failure of the midcentury Catholic counterculture. His analysis is best exemplified in his treatment of Dorothy Day, who is credited with "the invention, in the 1930s, of American Catholic romanticism."

It's clear that, on the whole, the author admires Day. She was, he acknowledges, strong-willed, both attractive and charming, passionate and genuinely compassionate, a compelling writer. He apparently accepts David J. O'Brien's assessment of her as "the most significant, interesting, and influential person in the history of American Catholicism" (*Commonweal*, December 19, 1980).

But there was also a dark side, Fisher writes, and it was dark indeed. Day was morbidly attracted to suffering, and espoused "one of the most abject brands of self-abnegation in American religious history"; her religiosity may have been tinged with "sadomasochistic impulses"; the essence of Catholic Worker spirituality was "a thirst for a short downward path to the absolute." Day was also Jansenistic in her approach to sexuality (wouldn't read the Kinsey report, was shocked to learn of promiscuity among Catholic Workers) and remained so all her life—this we know because when approaching sixty she wrote that "in any physical expression of...love this body of ours at whatever age is treacherous."

As one now dubbed "Senior Writer," I can advise Professor Fisher that he may wish to reconsider that last judgment when he reaches his declining years; also that chastity and celibacy are not of themselves proof of emotional disturbance. As for the rest, it's again a matter of context. Day did not invent (but did help recover) the ideas underlying her approach to life: that Christianity has something to do with a willing acceptance of the cross; that the burden of suffering, either imposed or chosen, can be lightened by acceptance; that suffering so received can serve to purify the self.

I do agree with Fisher, on the basis of other evidence, that the retreat masters Day enlisted for the Worker preached a particularly harsh and dour version of this strain within the Catholic tradition; on the testimony of those who knew her better than I, I don't believe she pushed their ideology to its limits or bought it as a package. She could, for instance, get along without things most people think necessary, partly out of detachment, partly out of the necessities of her work. But she didn't deprive herself of good books, music, conversation, the joys of mothering and friendship, the beauties of flowers, surf, sky. She was sometimes morose, sometimes brusque, basically a very serious person. But she loved life, was sometimes very funny, and was not a Tragic Figure.

In short, to the extent that Day and the Worker can be termed failures, psychohistory doesn't explain the matter. There are better and simpler explanations. Even apart from its quixotic elements (Peter Maurin's "Green Revolution," for example), the program Day set out for herself and the Worker was too much for anyone to accomplish in a lifetime. And she was not equipped to organize a successful revolution in Catholic or American mores (and didn't really try; she lived it more than she led it).

Besides which: Did she really fail?

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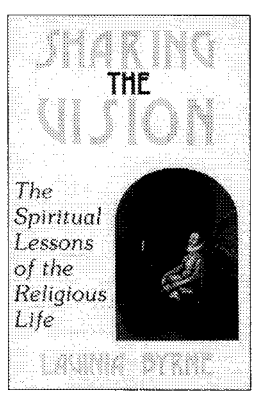

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Professor Fisher excuses himself from any examination of the impact the *ideas* she championed (e.g., on pacifism and [ugh!] "voluntaristic social welfare") have had, on the ground that these matters have been treated elsewhere. But readers may find it illuminating, as I have, to consider this book's thesis in the light of David O'Brien's essay in the present issue of *Commonweal*. O'Brien credits Day and Thomas Merton with central roles in promoting the "evangelical" (Gospel-based) style of being Catholic and American, a style which, he says, is even now becoming powerfully influential in the American church, notably in the bishops' recent pastoral letters.

[redacted] lack competence as well as space to discuss in any detail the uses to which the author puts the lives and work of Merton, Kerouac, Dooley, and Ed Willock (though I must say that it defeats me to grasp why Dooley is here at all, and gets two chapters). In any case, it is the treatment of Carol Jackson that I think best reveals Fisher's "outsider" perspective. An anecdote from my own experience may be relevant: I have what must be the unusual distinction of having received an apology from Dorothy Day.

At the time I was part of a group that had started a national Catholic daily, the *Sun Herald* (it was published from a rat-infested storefront in Kansas City, Mo., five days a week from October 1950 to April 1951). In the East on a rescue mission, I asked Dorothy Day for fund-raising advice. She replied, brusquely: "Go pray to St. Joseph." I thought she meant it, and probably tried to comply, but the next day she said she was sorry for brushing me off, and offered some names and ideas. Translation: (A) Because we had launched the *Sun Herald* with little experience, few contacts, and practically no money, we thought we were being fools for Christ. Day thought we were mainly fools, despite being nice people and orthodox Catholics. She had common sense, as Fisher once acknowledges, and she was herself a journalist. (B) The paper was a spin-off of *Integrity*, which was itself an offshoot of the Worker movement; but by this time Day had lost patience with the magazine and particularly with Carol Jackson, who planted the idea for the *Sun Herald* and became its guru.

The moral of the story is that Jackson and Day don't belong in the same book, at least not as exemplars of a single thesis. They were both converts, both charismatic and articulate. But Jackson, in my view, was more ideologue than thinker (and I say so as one who swallowed every issue of *Integrity* within an hour of its arrival). Jackson had converted from "an agnostic brand of socialism" to Catholicism, but even more to neoscholasticism. Having absorbed what she thought St. Thomas taught, she became an instant triumphalist, more Catholic than any pope and less afflicted by doubts than anybody, especially about morals. For her, trust in God was meaningless unless total. While she and Willock were its editors, *Integrity* condemned the rhythm method as "the unhappy compromise," reflecting and reinforcing the same values as the pill or the condom. Jackson (writing as Peter Michaels) condemned insurance on principle: it preempted trust in God and one's neighbor and it depended ultimately on the practice of usury, because most insurance company investments involve the taking of interest for nonproductive loans. She swept away all of psychiatry and modern psychology as not only godless but possibly/probably demonic; in their place she would put the medieval distinction of the four temperaments—choleric, melancholic, sanguine, and phlegmatic—along with the practice of exorcism. Her explanation of why God lets bad things (like insanity) happen to some people is "so that the rest of us can exercise charity toward them." And there goes the problem of evil.

(Fisher says Jackson eventually dropped her "militant Thomism" in favor of "a more mystical personalism." Not so one can notice; a year or so ago, writing in the *Wanderer*, she explained why Karl Rahner, Edward Schillebeeckx, Hans Küng, and others who have gone on from Thomism, became heretics: it was their personal immorality. One can't imagine any such judgment issuing from Dorothy Day.)

There is an elegaic tone about Fisher's treatment of *Integrity*, Jackson, and Willock: that is not wholly inappropriate but is stretched far beyond their particular

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cases: "After *Integrity*, Catholic romantics would have to travel alone." Willock and the other founders of Marycrest were "the last Catholics to risk everything while insisting on their rightful place within the church." The same tone pervades the treatment of Merton. As for the Worker, Fisher says that "only the very naive can any longer argue that during her lifetime [it] was not primarily a vehicle for Dorothy Day's powerful journalism"; today, he says, it exists primarily to preserve her memory rather than to be or become the kind of movement she envisioned.

Some of this is too-confident future history, amply rebuttable on present evidence; the bourgeois version of Catholicism is not the only one in play today. Fisher might have reflected that while he had to rescue *Integrity* and its founders from obscurity, the study of Thomas Merton's life and thought constitutes a small industry (admittedly devoted more to his spirituality than to his social criticism). I can't testify about the present direction or strength of the Worker, beyond noting that there are now nearly 140 Catholic Worker houses and farms as compared to 76 in 1982, and that Workers recently picketed the new office building of the United States Catholic Conference as too utterly posh for the pilgrim church of the poor.

Finally, if the half-century now closing is put into a larger context, it becomes rash indeed to predict that we have seen the last of the Catholic "romantics." Francis of Assisi, John of the Cross, Saints Teresa and Thérèse are still in the books; and Dorothy Day is no footnote but a living force. □

SCARLET PROSE

CARDINAL BERNARDIN

Easing Conflicts and Battling for the Soul of American Catholicism

Eugene Kennedy

Bonus Books, Inc., $19.95, 316 pp.

Thomas J. Reese

Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, Archbishop of Chicago, is without question one of the most important American prelates in the post-Vatican II church. As general secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (1968–72), under the direction of his mentor, Cardinal John Dearden of Detroit, he reorganized the bishops' staff into an organization that has served the American church well.

He served the conference as president (1974–77) and has chaired major committees, such as canonical affairs, prolife activities, and the ad hoc committee that drafted the peace pastoral. Since 1973 he has been elected to every synod of bishops, where he has served on the Council of the Secretariat of the Synod. In addition, he was part of a group of bishops that helped to resolve the Seattle crisis. All this he did while being the archbishop first of Cincinnati and then Chicago.

Bernardin has been hailed for his collegial style and his consensus-building talent. He has been both loyal to the Holy See and politically adroit at getting the Vatican to respond to the pastoral needs of the U.S. church. As a result, there is a crying need for a good biography of Joseph Bernardin. Whether it is possible to write such a biography while he is still alive is doubtful. For liberal church writers today, Bernardin is a heroic saintly figure, while reactionaries consider him a viper at the church's breast. Scholarly objectivity requires time and distance, and the private papers which are unavailable today.

Despite these handicaps, Eugene Kennedy has written a book that is required reading for everyone interested in the American church. In twenty-three short chapters, Kennedy follows Bernardin from his birth in 1928 to a seamstress mother—who is the most delightful character in the book—to his being head of the sec-

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ond largest diocese in the U.S. Though filled with wonderful stories, the book jumps back and forth from topic to topic. It might have been easier to read if one topic, like the "conspiracy" against Cardinal John Cody, Bernardin's predecessor in Chicago, had been fully treated in one place before going on to something else.

The book tends toward popular hagiography rather than objective reporting. Nowhere do we find Bernardin making a mistake that Kennedy cannot excuse or explain. Rather than blaming the media, would it not be better to admit that Bernardin made a serious error in appearing to favor one candidate in 1976, when he expressed disappointment with Carter's position on abortion but was encouraged by Ford's? Even Chicago archbishops are human and make mistakes. And anything liberals could consider objectionable is explained away by Bernardin's need to prove his loyalty to Rome.

Stylistically, the book could have done with fewer adjectives and less purple prose. A sample: "Studying him [Bernardin] closely, one could observe the slight tightening of his jaw muscles and the small quick movements that, like an uncoiling rope behind a harpoon, trailed the contained but intense thrust of his concentration into any approaching field of obligation."

Kennedy gives no explanation of how he researched this biography. He cites few written sources. No mention is made of Jim Castelli's *The Bishops and the Bomb* or Charles Dahm's *Power and Authority in the Catholic Church*, although both are relevant to his treatment of the peace pastoral and Cardinal Cody. Nor is it clear how much Bernardin helped the author. Often Kennedy writes as though he is inside the cardinal's mind.

For example, here is Bernardin on the day he received his red biretta:

> Donning his clerical attire, Bernardin's face betrayed no hint that he recalled the reckless episode that had whirled through his life like a tornado near the end of September 1981, when excerpts were published from the journal-like tapes made by Greeley.... Bernardin could not look out at the familiar coffee-colored buildings of Rome streaming past

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the car window without thinking of the history and progress of the American church.... As the car passed through the gates..., Bernardin recalled the costly and elegant celebrations that had surrounded the appointments of the cardinal archbishops in that now closed golden era.... As Bernardin vested... he wondered if his own decision to discourage chartered flights and gala festivities would set a precedent for the future....He thought of the advice that his mother had given him before his ordination to the bishopric eighteen years before. "Walk straight," Maria Bernardin had advised her son, "and try not to look too pleased with yourself".... Bernardin drifted back in memory to his childhood during that aching, Spartan decade of the thirties.... John Paul, Bernardin reflected, had no memory of his mother, only the years of siege and occupation.... He smiled inwardly as he recalled telling his mother of his change of plans.... Bernardin remembered how he had proposed to enter the seminary just after the conclusion of World War II....

Whether Bernardin actually told Kennedy what he was thinking minute by minute that day, or whether this is simply poetic license, is unclear to the reader. It must be the latter unless Bernardin dictates his daydreams into a tape recorder. There are actually few direct quotes from Bernardin in the book, and the lengthiest is from a December 1974 interview.

What many readers will find most provocative is the book's treatment of Andrew Greeley's involvement in the bishops' conference study of Catholic priests, published in 1972 and the "conspiracy" to dethrone Cody. Kennedy worked with Greeley on the priest study and both are from Chicago where they lived under Cody. Kennedy uses this biography as an opportunity to "tell all." I am sure that Greeley's response will also prove interesting.

Kennedy, the writer, describes his book as a psychological portrait, not an exhaustive biography; I wish that Kennedy, the psychologist, had given us a deeper analysis of Bernardin's character. It is not enough to say that Bernardin is a Southern gentleman (so are a lot of bigots) and Italian (so are some reactionary autocrats). Losing his father at the age of four, caring for a younger sister while his mother worked, growing up Catholic in the South, an Italian cleric in an Irish church, a phobia for conflict, a desire to please, a fear of hurting, a workaholic love of paper, all of this is described but not subjected to psychological analysis. Nor is his spiritual life laid bare, although there is a revealing story of his seminarians motivating him to pray an hour a day. Bernardin remains a man we admire but do not really know. As Kennedy explains: the book is "necessarily unfinished and leaves a satisfying aura of mystery, a suggestion of unknowability, a hint of tales yet to be told, of a destiny not yet fulfilled." Hmmm. □

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MONSIGNOR ON THE MARGINS

REV. CHARLES OWEN RICE
Apostle of Contradiction
Patrick J. McGeever
Duquesne University Press $28.95, 312 pp.

Russell W. Gibbons

Sometime in the early phase of his career as a social activist, I first encountered Charles Owen Rice on the front cover of a long-defunct Marxist ideological journal, *The New International*. The headline proclaimed an anomaly characteristic of this "troublesome priest" who traveled both the middle and left side of the American political road during six decades of reform, change, and reaction: "CATHOLICISM vs. MARXISM: A Debate: Msgr. Charles O. Rice vs. Max Schachtman."

What Charles Rice (b. 1908) said in the forgotten essay forty years ago is not so important as the fact that as a regular clergyman of the pre-Vatican II church he did not hesitate to appear under the covers of a Marxist theoretical journal. Perhaps his well-credentialed anticommunism of that time served to insulate him from the brush. Whatever, Charles Rice was not reluctant to enter the fringes of the political left to debate. If not an "apostle of contradiction," as Patrick McGeever suggests in his subtitle, he was at least a practitioner.

Rice attained a national reputation as an agitator for social justice early in his career. Newspaper files of the one-time *Steel City* reflect the delight of headline-writers who capsuled his public roles: in Depression days, "labor priest," "flophouse father," "pastor of the poorest"; a "rent czar" in the wartime New Deal; an alleged "red-baiter" in the heady days when American labor had organized one out of every three workers; a greeter of presidents, governors, and union presidents through the New Deal to the Fair Deal; and finally, a "born-again radical" in the Nixon-Vietnam-civil rights era through the Reagan counter-revolution.

To those who observed Rice closely over these years, there was a remarkable consistency to his career. Commentator Sherley Uhl, the savvy, longtime political editor of the *Pittsburgh Press*, once said of Rice, "He was the most active apostle of controversy in town (and) a consistent defender of the underdog." Unlike others who entered the public dialogue, Rice was willing to admit error of style and tactics, and always was mindful of his critics. But he never reassessed his politics according to changing times.

McGeever, like many of the citizens of this era of categorization and superficiality, strains to find an acceptable description for Rice, using phrases usually found only in the ideological prints: "liberal reformist," "secular revolutionary," etc. McGeever seems hung up on labels. His chapters reflect his frustration with being unable to place Rice into either a round hole of social activism or a square recep-

> *He was a highly effective battler for numerous liberal reformist causes, and sometimes a law-defying rebel, but never a revolutionary. Although he allied himself at times with secular and Christian radicals, he always stopped short of the revolutionary outlook or personal commitments that would have made him one of their number...(but he) helped to move the American Catholic church toward greater involvement in American social and political life than was the case a half century ago.*
>
> —Patrick J. McGeever
> *Rev. Charles Owen Rice*

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tacle of traditionalist clergyman-as-liberal-reformer.

However one finally sees Rice, the fact remains that he was in the forefront of a lonely band of clerics who championed the cause of unions seeking the economic democracy promised them under the New Deal. Those years of confrontation found a conservative, immigrant church uncomfortable about implementing social justice when it challenged the power structure. Rice soon became one of those priests who saw in the Roosevelt administration an appropriate response to the devastating unemployment and poverty of the Depression. This support would help consolidate the New Deal-Fair Deal domination of American politics for most of the thirties and forties.

Rice also helped break the stereotype of aloof priests distant from public service by becoming administrator of World War II rent control in Pittsburgh, and later by serving as a labor arbitrator. To many in both the incumbent and insurgent union politics of the CIO, he was overly involved.

This led to the passionate judgments of many (including McGeever) that saw Rice as a paramount hunter of Communists within the ranks of the CIO in the postwar years. Rice's biographer accords him a questionable distinction as "the fomenter of the crusade which expelled the left from the CIO." That mass expulsion forty years ago is still a matter of debate among labor historians, some of whom maintain that it sapped the militancy from a progressive labor movement that would subsequently align itself with the witch hunt at home and the cold war abroad.

Rice straddled two generations of clerics who dissented; he made his mark in the course of American labor politics, later adding an influential voice to the civil rights and Vietnam antiwar movements. Though never a part of the church establishment, Rice knew the boundaries of acceptable protest. He may have exaggerated the Stalinist presence in the U.S. labor movement, but on balance he agitated for a progressive America and gave inspiration during a sea change of conflict. Like Mother Jones (1830-1930), he prayed for the dead, but fought like hell for the living. □

KEEPING A CIVIL TONGUE

CONTESTED LIVES
The Abortion Debate in an American Community
Faye D. Ginsburg
University of California Press, $25, 329 pp.

Eileen P. Flynn

The change of direction signaled by the U. S. Supreme Court in *Webster* as well as the atmosphere of uncertainty surrounding the direction the Court will take in its next term have given a renewed impetus to abortion activists. Who are these people and what motivates them? Faye D. Ginsburg's answers to these pressing questions make me think that any hope of forging a consensus on this issue in this country at this time is illusory.

Contested Lives focuses on prolife and prochoice activists in Fargo, North Dakota. The book pays particular attention to the activism generated in response to the 1981 opening and subsequent day-to-day operation of an abortion clinic in Fargo, the only such facility in North Dakota. As an anthropologist, Ginsburg was interested in tackling an area that is ordinarily overlooked in social research: how contrasting views take shape in everyday life. Her inkling was that "grass-roots abortion activists tend to be overlooked and misrepresented," and she consciously undertook the task of setting the record straight. As it turned out, *Contested Lives* is insightful, fair, and informative and presents a plausible theory of why women (the sole activist sex in her studies) come to one or the other kind of activism on the abortion issue.

Ginsburg observes that the way in which a woman interprets significant events in her life determines whether she will be prolife or prochoice. Based on their experiences of pregnancy and motherhood, prolife women are wont to assert "the primacy of reproduction and mothering for women's identity and authority" and to react against "the materialistic and individualistic trends in American culture." Prochoice activists, on the other hand, typically question "the confines of motherhood, usually after first birth," and experience "a 'conversion' brought about by contact with feminism and other social movements of the 1960s and 1970s," leading to a decision to advocate access to legal abortion. After listening to the stories of prolife and prochoice women, Ginsburg rejects the usual stereotypes. She describes prolife women who are independent and who advocate many feminist goals as well as prochoice advocates who love their husbands and children and think of abortion as a compassionate alternative for pregnant women in difficult circumstances.

The disagreement between prolife and prochoice factions (who in Fargo always manage to be civil to one another) is over the proper place of reproduction and nurturance in the female life cycle not, according to Ginsburg, over abstract considerations such as what constitutes the rights of the fetus or the proper role of the state.

As long as such subjective factors as women's interpretations of their reproductive experiences dictate their attitudes toward abortion and influence the larger debate, there will continue to be widespread and deep-rooted division over this issue. It seems to me that if we are to get beyond this subjectivity and division we need to find a way to re-enshrine the kind of moral discourse in which people are embarrassed to propose courses of action which are replete with harm without suggesting truly proportionate reasons to justify the choices they make. □

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REVIEWERS

ROBERT G. HOYT, *now on the* Commonweal *staff, has been editor of the* National Catholic Reporter *and* Christianity and Crisis.

THOMAS J. REESE, *S.J., is a fellow at the Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University and author of* Archbishop: Inside the Power Structure of the American Catholic Church *(Harper & Row).*

RUSSELL W. GIBBONS *was a labor editor in Pittsburgh for twenty-three years and is with the Phillip Murray Institute of Labor Studies.*

EILEEN P. FLYNN *is an associate professor at Saint Peter's College, Jersey City, N.J. Her most recent book, co-authored with Gloria Thomas, is* Living Faith: An Introduction to Theology *(Sheed & Ward).*

IN BRIEF

DOORS OF PERCEPTION: ICONS AND THEIR SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE, *by John Baggley, with an Appendix by Richard Temple. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, $12.95, 160 pp.*

THE ILLUMINATING ICON, *by Anthony Ugolnik. William B. Eerdmans, $18.95, 280 pp.*

What is the particular quality of light that shines from within certain Orthodox icons? Or the harmony that is produced in the resounding chorales of Orthodox liturgies? What in heaven, or earth, do they teach us?

These two books lead us into unfamiliar but inspiring territory: the aesthetic, theological, and sacramental genius of the Russian Orthodox sensibility. The authors see in the multidimensional attributes of Orthodoxy a suitable antidote to the twentieth-century materialist malaise, whether Marxist or capitalist.

Doors of Perception succinctly describes the mechanics, aesthetic theory, history, and theology of icons. An icon is a painted image that serves as a "door" or threshold through which the whole person passes into the divine realm, "a meeting point of divine grace and human need." In the Catholic sense, icons are thus sacramental: human works that image forth and make present the imageless. They instruct, they edify. They lead the faithful more deeply into the communal and liturgical life of the church, and to participation in the divine life. Their beauty and inner harmony, once appreciated, attract and then transform.

In *The Illuminating Icon*, Anthony Ugolnik, a Russian Orthodox American, reflects on the aesthetic and communal qualities of his religious heritage and brings them critically to bear on the major antagonists of the cold war. An ordained deacon, college professor, army veteran, frequent visitor to the Soviet Union, and self-styled cultural outsider, Ugolnik questions the individualized civil religion of the U.S. as well as the materialist tenets of the Soviet system. He displays a rich background in Orthodox theology, particularly Russian theologians of the last two centuries, not a few of whom suffered government persecution. In examining their insights, he underscores the aesthetic and communal qualities of Orthodoxy, which, he argues, could help the West rediscover its spiritual purpose. His love of his heritage is immense, instructive, and inviting. In that sense, it is like the remarkable icons that inspire and illuminate both these works. P.J.

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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 610)

of any kind.

Mr. West's concern for equal application of the law is an important one, but was not the subject of our editorial. It is, in fact, difficult to discern how he jumped to his conclusions from reading "The Business of Us All." In a previous editorial, "Crime and Its Remedies" [May 19, 1989], we argued that those involved in the Central Park wilding should pay for their crimes in accordance with the law. Obviously, the same applies to the Hawkins tragedy.

THE EDITORS

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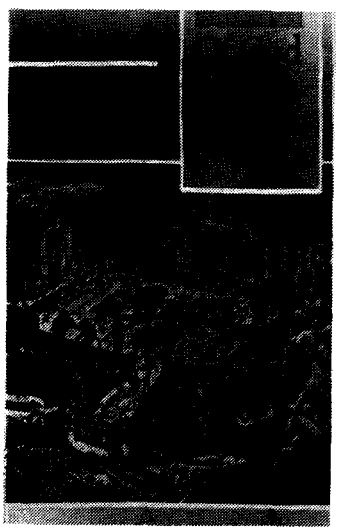

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Jay B. McDaniel;
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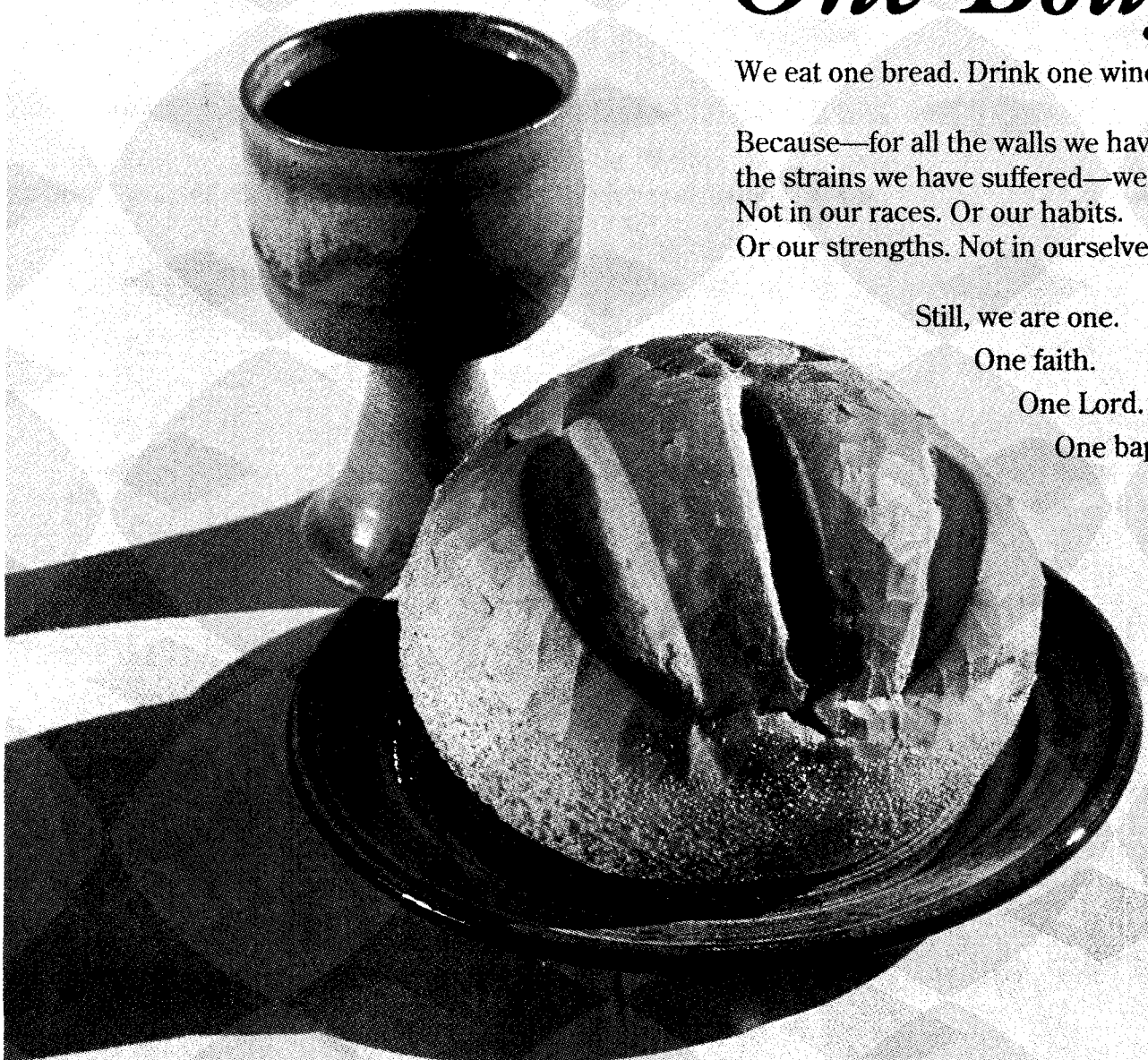

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